

CONTENTS.

Claims of the Old Testament to regard,	1
The Defects of the Old Testament,	10
Interpretation of Words,	15
Changes in the Meaning of Scriptural Expressions,	25
The Particularity of the Gospels,	34
Irreverent Use of Scripture,	38
Translation and Exposition—Matthew v. 33—48,	39
Translation and Exposition—Matt. vi. 1—18,	49
The Feast of Tabernacles,	61
Uses of the Jewish Feasts,	69
The Evangelists have written a true history,	73
Simplicity of Design in the Evangelists,	78
The Preaching recorded in the Book of the Acts,	84
Interpretation—what is it,	97
The Lord's Prayer,	104
Sketch of the Mosaic Institutions,	112
On the Baptismal Command,	124
Of Crucifixion,	129
Translation and Exposition—Matthew vi. 19—34,	136
Translation and Exposition—Matt. vii,	147
On Translation of Scripture,	161
The Uncorrupted Preservation of the New Testament,	165
The Sermon on the Mount,	170
The Verse System,	178
On the Mosaical Distinction of Animals into Clean and Unclean,	182
Profitable Reading of the Bible,	193
Peculiar Language applied to Jews in the Bible,	205
Peculiar Language applied to Christians in the Bible,	214
Improper Quotation of Scripture,	222

The Titles, Italicks, and Points of the Common Version, .	227
Translation and Exposition—Matthew viii. 1—17, .	230
Translation and Exposition—Matt. viii. 18—34, .	241
On Biblical Criticism,	250
On the Demoniacs of the New Testament,	255
Editorial Note,	303

 ERRATA.

- Page 116 line 8 for 'corner' read, cover.
- " 144 " 26 for '*affairs*' read, *concerns*.
- " 177 " 24 for 'might' read, may.
- " " " " for 'must' read, might.
- " 236 " 7 for '*ζουσιαν*' read, *στρατιωτας*.
- " 282 " 8 after the word 'humors' change the period to a comma, and insert the words, and often exhibit prodigious strength.
- " 293 " 16 for 'person' read, persons.

THE
SCRIPTURAL INTERPRETER.

CLAIMS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT TO REGARD.

It is true of the Old Testament as of almost every thing else, that opinion runs into opposite extremes. These books have been unduly exalted and unjustly depreciated. A proper judgment of their character will preserve us alike from that extravagant estimate of their worth which refuses to allow a higher value even to the records of the Christian revelation, and from that erroneous view of their contents which has led some writers to speak of them in terms of faint praise, or even of positive disrespect.

There are three points of view under which these writings may be examined; as literary productions, as documents of a divine revelation, and as sources of strength and light to the Christian's faith.

As literary productions they are entitled to the highest regard for their antiquity, their variety, and their in-

trinsic merit. Composed in a distant age, some of them long before the harp of Greece sent forth its immortal strains, rich in the forms of thought and expression peculiar to a period when science and refinement were in the first stages of their slow developement, bearing on every page the impress of a state of society essentially different from that which prevails among us, they deserve beyond any other works the study of the curious scholar. Here are monuments of epochs concerning which loose and uncertain tradition is the only other source of intelligence, voices that come from such a depth of the past that if they were now for the first time to strike our sense we should start with mingled emotions of awe and rapture. How *modern* do all the remains which antiquarian zeal has collected from American, British, or even Italian soil appear, when set by the side of those hymns which David wrote nearly three thousand years ago, or those annals in preparing which Moses must have used four centuries before the birth of David documents of a still more ancient date. If this volume had been lost in the calamities which fell on the nation whose laws, history and literature it contains, and were now discovered with the proofs of its genuineness on which we rely, what a commotion would it make in the world.

The variety of its contents increases its value. It is not one treatise, nor one book; it was not published by one author, nor written in one age; it is not a collection of works having a common design and a uniform character. In this single volume we find prose and poetry, narrative and didactic composition, history in its primitive forms, the constitution of a civil government, the

ritual of an ecclesiastical state, tales of real life, songs of praise, hymns of penitence, national proverbs and sayings of the wise, the earnest remonstrances, the pathetic lamentations and the fervid hopes of religious teachers, whose souls patriotism and faith had prepared to be oracles of inspiration. It is indeed wonderful what a variety of tastes may here be gratified; the child and the philosopher, the calm inquirer after facts and he who thirsts for intellectual excitement, the student of moral wisdom and the lover of devout sentiment may equally be delighted by the examination of these pages. Monotony has never been charged upon them; nor can they ever weary one who will take the pains to read them intelligently.

The excellence which distinguishes most parts of the Old Testament is rendered more conspicuous by this variety. In each kind of composition we have proofs of the greatest success. Where shall we find a more touching simplicity or a more glowing eloquence, where such examples of the sublime, the beautiful, the tender, the instructive? No where, except in the teaching of Jesus Christ. These features of the Jewish Scriptures have extorted the praise of heathens and infidels. I have not room to cite passages. Let me name the story of Joseph, the dying benedictions of the patriarchs, the national songs of Israel, the psalms in which the royal bard uttered his feelings of piety like the music of birds so rich yet so natural as to seem like involuntary perfection, the concise, pithy maxims of Solomon, the indignant and bold language of the prophets rising often into strains of unequalled power, and again their descriptions of the glory that would surround the latter

days, in reading which it is impossible not to be kindled with the fire that burns in every word. Profane literature has its splendid productions, both of ancient and modern date, but it offers none with which the admirer of the Hebrew writers need shrink from bringing them into comparison.

What has now been said respects the literary character of these books, in considering which we meet the unbeliever on his own ground and in their behalf contest the right which he has to treat them with contempt or neglect. To us however they present themselves as records and memorials of divine revelation. I shall not enter into an examination of their claims to this character, but supposing that the divine origin of the Jewish economy is not doubted by any of my readers, I observe that as documents of a divine revelation, works exhibiting or growing out of a miraculous dispensation, the Jewish Scriptures ought to receive our grateful and careful perusal. The institutions of human legislators, the forms of polity or law which they may have given to a people however remote or dissimilar from us, are investigated with anxious research. How much more should those laws and that form of government be studied which bear the seal of Jehovah. The history of every nation under the sun is considered a just pursuit of learned industry. How much more worthy of attention is the history of a people, over whom God spread the blessing of his supernatural providence, and whose path for ages was marked with a special brightness, as if it were a galaxy in the firmament of nations. The exploits of heroes and the lives of great men, whatever was the origin or character of their greatness,

have been accounted subjects of profitable interest. What then must be the interest with which we should dwell on the pages which tell us of those who communed with the Almighty as a man with his friend, and received from him promises of personal protection or messages of high import to others. Who so illustrious as the patriarchs of the old world before the flood and of the new world that it left, the men whom God raised up to be the leaders of his chosen people, or the prophets in whom he put his spirit? The effusions of pious and patriotic sentiment, from whatever order of minds they have come, have been much esteemed in all ages and countries. What price then should be set on those which bear the stamp of holy genius?

It is not merely as Jewish works that these writings deserve attention. If the descendants of Abraham had presented one among many examples of the interposition of Heaven for a similar purpose, all the claims which have now been urged for the study of their sacred books would exist in full force. But these books come under our notice with more peculiar attributes. They are the only records of a miraculous dispensation, still more they are the only records of true religion, from the creation of the world to the Christian era. Look into other books written previously to the birth of Christ, and what do you find? The history of idolaters, the poetry of pagans, the philosophy of heathens. In the Old Testament, amidst all the error and sin of which it has faithfully preserved the remembrance, the great truths of religion continually beam upon us. From the first verse of Genesis to the last of Malachi they are kept in

distinct view, and the reader is constantly made to feel that this is a different volume from any that could be collected from the remnants of profane antiquity. This circumstance gives to the Old Testament in my estimation its chief value. We learn from it what God has done for the world—the care which he extended over its infancy, the punishment which he inflicted for its wickedness, the means which he took to prevent the knowledge of himself from being lost when mankind had relapsed into idolatry, the methods which he pursued for this end till the time came to make a nation the depository of the precious truth, the system which he constructed to keep this people from unfaithfulness to their trust, the various discipline which he adopted towards them in their subsequent fickleness, and the sounds of warning and promise which from time to time he caused to issue from the lips of his inspired servants. We perceive a continuous history running through this series of writings. Events and feelings, the circumstances and the productions of different men, in periods widely apart are pervaded by the spirit of true, divine religion ; and it gives to them a unity of character that enhances while it marks their value.

As we contemplate these evidences of God's care for the religious instruction of the world, we may also examine the character and effect of such a partial disclosure as he was pleased to make in the Mosaic signs of truth. Imagination could not have enabled us to conduct such inquiries ; but now, by having the *facts* before us, we can judge how far a revelation of so limited extent would be effectual in enlightening and controlling the human mind, and from the comparison which we can institute

between this and the gospel may more clearly distinguish some points of excellence in the latter, our familiarity with which is apt to blunt our perception of their character.

Still it will be forced upon our notice by such a comparison, that the elementary truths of religion are those which the soul wants and which it recognises under different measures of revelation; and so far as their substance is embodied in the sentiments of the Hebrew sage or poet, a claim is created on our regard which an honest and devout heart will not be slow to admit. The psalms of the sweet singers of Israel have always been the delight of Christians; from them they have drawn the language of their own prayers, have expressed in their words the emotions of gratitude, trust, contrition and joy which have overflowed their own hearts, and have adapted their images and illustrations to the circumstances of their own times. No higher tribute could be paid to these matchless productions, and nothing could render insensibility to their excellence more culpable.

If the Hebrew Scriptures stood alone, without giving or receiving support, they would therefore merit our reverential study. But this is not their situation; for, in the third place, an intimate connexion may be traced between the Old and the New Testament, a connexion formed by several ties of mutual dependence. First, we cannot read the Hebrew Prophets without discovering predictions which were not fulfilled when the Old Testament was closed by the death of the last prophet. These predictions require an acquaintance with the life of Jesus Christ to satisfy their meaning. Again,

we cannot read the New Testament without meeting with references to ancient prophecies, which can be found only in the Jewish Scriptures. 'All things,' said Jesus, 'must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me.' Farther, we encounter on every page of the New Testament allusions to passages in the sacred literature of the Jews, quotations more or less full, illustrations more or less clear drawn from their ritual and history, and an habitual recurrence of the mind of the writer or speaker to their sacred books, in which the hearer or reader was plainly expected to sympathise, all of which render it necessary that the Old Testament should be familiar to us, that we may understand the books written by the apostles and disciples of our Lord. Without such a knowledge how much of what Christ said must lie in obscurity. How can a considerable portion of Paul's Epistles be understood without it? What a mystery must his letter to the Galatians be? Who can explain a single chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews unless he have carefully studied the books of Moses? Once more; while the original language of the New Testament is Greek, much of the phraseology, many modes of expression, and many modes of thought, must be traced to the influence of the Hebrew Scriptures upon those among whom Jesus and his apostles lived, and whose habits of speech they adopted. Most of these peculiarities appear in a translation, and strengthen the importance of a diligent study of the Old Testament. And, to add only one other remark, Christianity is a continuation of that course of religious teaching and supernatural care which I have

observed constitutes a thread of unity running through the Old Testament. This thread is carried on through the Gospels and Epistles, and may not with propriety or safety be broken. Indeed it cannot be severed. The two parts of the Bible are held together by an indestructible bond; they are parts of one vast series of revelations, beginning with the human race and terminating with the Author and Finisher of our faith. They illustrate and enforce one another. If one be taken away, the other will be weakened; if one be regarded with proper reverence, the other will receive attention. They point to each other, they depend on each other. 'The divine mission of Moses and that of Jesus,' says Dr Priestley, * 'are inseparably connected, and the religion of the Hebrews and that of the Christians are parts of the same scheme; so that the separation of them is absolutely impossible.'

Instead of treating the Old Testament with neglect, we should then make it the subject of frequent and attentive perusal. The scholar and man of taste will find in it more to repay him for the time he may devote to its study, than he can derive from all other masters of eloquence or song. He who with an humble curiosity desires to learn the conduct of God towards our world, may gather from its pages information which no other books can give him. While the Christian will draw from it illustration and support for his faith in that Teacher, for whom Moses and the Prophets were sent to prepare the way.

* Preface to the Notes on Scripture, p. xii.

THE DEFECTS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

The excellences and connexions, which have been shown in the last article to belong to the Old Testament, entitle it to the respect and love of Christians. It is said however that it has serious defects, and that its imperfect views of God and religion have been as clouds before the better light of the new revelation. Without insisting on the familiar remark, that we ought not to judge of any thing from the improper use to which it may be turned, I may remind the reader of two principles which should be regarded in forming an opinion on the merits of the Hebrew Scriptures. The first is, that if we will fairly weigh their claims we shall compare them not so much with the productions of Apostles and other Christian writers as with works of contemporaneous origin. Let the taste and sentiment of the Old Testament be contrasted with those of any book that has come to us from European or Asiatic antiquity of an equally remote date; what an immense superiority will be at once perceived. Let us treat these writings as candidly as we would those of any heathen author, and complaint of their defects will be exchanged for acknowledgment of the internal evidences which they present of divine illumination.

A regard to this principle will lead us to another which ought not to be overlooked, viz. that we should judge of the excellence of a work by considering its suitableness to the persons for whom it was designed, and the purpose which it was meant to effect. Now the Old Testament was not composed for us, but for a

people in another part of the world, whose mental associations and moral habits were very different from ours; it was intended to keep alive among them a knowledge of the one God and of such a measure and mode of religion as was adapted to persons in their state of intellectual and moral progress. For them it would have more attraction and would exert over them greater power, if in its style of expression, and even in the character of its doctrines and commandments it wore an appearance of condescension to meet their wants than if it attempted at once to lift them to the eminence of pure spiritual faith. God, be it remembered, was unfolding a system of education for mankind. He began with a single people, and it was necessary to give them instruction of such a kind as was fitted to them; unless he chose to bring their minds into a condition to receive and appreciate higher forms of truth by a still more surprising exercise of miraculous power than any that is recorded in the Bible. Instead therefore of being offended by the details of the Mosaic ritual and the methods through which Jehovah communicated his will and guarded it against instant rejection or early neglect, I discern in them tokens of a regard, immediately for the Jewish people but finally for the whole world, whose wisdom I must admire while its condescension to human infirmity demands my warmest gratitude. Besides it should not be forgotten, that what may seem to us unworthy of the Divine Being or inconsistent with benevolence of heart or purity of taste may not have appeared to the contemporaries of Moses and David under these aspects; and to censure a work written not for us but for them because it contains such passages, is rather more unrea-

sonable than to pronounce the eastern dress inconvenient because we are not accustomed to it, or the patriarchal manners immoral because they differed from our own.

Still it will be said, that the Old Testament presents defective views of religion ; or in other words, that Judaism is not Christianity. This remark may be received in a much broader sense than justice allows. To undertake a full investigation of its extent and support would be to enter on an immense field of inquiry. On what are generally considered the principal defects of the Hebrew Scriptures, a few words may serve as guides to sound and profitable conclusions.

It is alleged that the Old Testament ascribes attributes and actions to God, that are irreconcilable with correct ideas of his nature and character. He is represented as changeable, revengful, the author of the wickedness which he punishes, the violater of his own promises. These are serious charges ; but a single remark will divest them of their importance. They are founded on modes of speech, the interpretation of which falls within the province of biblical science. These examples of the use of language give rise to philological questions, and theology has no concern with them till their true meaning is ascertained ; and then it appears that instead of presenting the difficulties which they were supposed to involve, they are (in most instances at least) the forms into which general truths acknowledged equally by the Christian and the Jew were cast by the intellectual or moral necessities of a particular people in a remote age.

Yet it is urged as a second defect in the character of

the Old Testament, that it does not reveal those attributes of the Deity on which the Christian most loves to meditate, his impartial justice, his rich benevolence, his free mercy. Often as this objection has been stated, it seems extraordinary that it should ever have been made by one who had read the Hebrew Scriptures with common attention. That Jehovah there appears as the Ruler and Benefactor of a particular people is an unavoidable consequence of the fact, that he raised them up to be the guardians of religious truth. His character must have been presented to them under those relations which might convey to a very careless reader the idea of a national divinity. But passages frequently occur in which his universal sovereignty, his just dominion and his wide beneficence are distinctly commemorated. And when we read at the very entrance of the Jewish system this proclamation—‘The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression and sin ;’* and find in the Psalms the reiteration of the sentiment in terms like these—‘The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and of great mercy ; the Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works ;’† and in the Prophets meet with an explanation of the divine government, couched in these words, —‘It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them, that they may return every man from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin ;’‡ and when a more diligent

* Exod. xxxiv. 6. 7.—† Psalm cxlv. 8, 9.—‡ Jerem. xxxvi. 3.

perusal shows us that such passages are scattered through the volume as gems of sparkling purity, we cannot resist the conviction that to charge the Old Testament with exhibiting only the sterner features of the divine character is gross injustice.

Another allegation sometimes brought against these books will in like manner vanish before a candid study of their contents. It has been said that they inculcate a ceremonial religion, and foster the spirit of ritual service. That they enjoined on the Jew a strict observance of the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic law no one can deny. But this circumstance increases rather than diminishes their value, both as it evinces the wisdom that appointed these sensible defences of truth, which if given in its simple state would have been disregarded and lost before a single generation had transmitted it to their posterity; and as we owe to this feature in the Jewish economy those unequivocal expressions of the superiority of righteousness or moral excellence over ritual obedience, of which numerous as they are I need only quote two examples. 'I desired mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.'* 'What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God?†' It is impossible to read the books of Moses and the Prophets and not observe the anxiety which is manifested to prevent a reliance on outward forms. The spirit not only breathes through these forms, but is continually breathed upon them.

We may notice one other fact which is accounted

* Hosea, vi. 6. † Micah, vi. 8.

among the marks of defect in the Old Testament ; that it contains no revelation of a future life. I admit the objection in all its strength. The books of Moses I believe are silent on this subject. And if we discern intimations of faith in immortality on the pages of the latter Prophets, there is reason to believe that they are tokens not of inspiration, but of the gradual progress of the Jewish mind in its use of the means which a wider acquaintance with human opinion and hope had given it. Why the Supreme Being withheld the knowledge of this glorious truth it would be foreign from my present purpose to inquire. The fact being admitted, I need only remark that it does not in the slightest degree reduce the value of the Hebrew Scriptures in those respects in which we have seen that they are entitled to our regard ; while it invests the gospel which has 'brought life and immortality to light' with peculiar claims on our gratitude and obedience.

INTERPRETATION OF WORDS.

[From Marsh's Lectures.]

Bishop Marsh, the translator of Michaelis's Introduction to the New Testament, delivered some years ago in the discharge of his duties as Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge a course of lectures, four 'parts' of which have been reprinted in this country. From the xivth and xvth Lectures are taken the

extracts which make up this article. The omission of intermediate passages, in which the writer pursues the discussion of various connected topics, does not destroy the unity nor lessen the value of the remarks here presented.

‘ In all languages words are only signs. When they are spoken, they are signs to the hearer of what was thought by the speaker : when they are written, they are signs to the reader of what was thought by the writer. The interpretation therefore of any word, whether written by an ancient or by a modern author, must depend on the following question ; What notion did the author himself affix to that word when he committed it to writing ? Consequently all our inquiries into the meaning of a word in any particular passage, inquiries which sometimes diverge in numerous directions, must be all brought at last to concentrate in that single point, *the notion affixed to it in that passage by the author.*

The discovery of this notion will be attended with greater or less difficulty according to the relative situation of the reader to the author. If the latter uses the same language which is spoken by the former and writes on a familiar subject, he will be readily understood, because he employs expressions of which the meaning is determined by usage equally known to both parties. In such cases the reader, unless he has a previous desire of perverting the author’s meaning, will commonly understand the words as they were intended to be understood ; they will really be signs to the reader, of what was thought by the writer. If instead of writing on a familiar subject he writes on matters of science, the

difficulty of interpretation will indeed be increased ; but this additional difficulty will not be of that description which creates ambiguity. The words will still perform their functions with exactness ; for the definitions which are used in science prevent all misunderstanding. The Elements of Euclid will be understood in every age and nation precisely in the same sense as they were understood by the author. In works composed on morality and religion, where mixed modes which are not easily defined are the objects of contemplation, it is always more difficult to ascertain an author's meaning, however attentive he himself may have been to the choice of his expressions. But in works of fancy and imagination, where even in the author's own mind precision and discrimination are frequently overlooked in the combinations of poetic imagery, occasional ambiguity will unavoidably take place in the interpretation of his words.

If the work which we undertake to interpret, is written in a foreign language, we shall not only have to encounter the preceding difficulties, according to their several gradations, but the additional difficulty of understanding the language itself. If indeed it be a modern language and beside the assistance derived from grammars and dictionaries the reader has the advantage of conversing with those whose language it is, the words of that language may gradually become to him as familiar signs as the words of his own language. But if the work which we undertake to interpret is written in a dead language, an accumulation of difficulty will take place, according to the extent or the scantiness of the means which we possess of discovering the meaning of the words which are extant in that language. This is

a kind of difficulty entirely distinct from that, which attends what is commonly called the *learning* of a dead language. A dead language, which can be acquired only by grammar and lexicon, is more or less easily learnt according to the paucity or abundance of its words, the simplicity or variety of its inflexions, and the clearness or intricacy of its construction. Hence the Hebrew language is more easily learnt than the Greek ; yet the examples in which it is difficult to ascertain with precision the meaning of words are more frequent in the former than in the latter. A passage may be easily construed, yet not easily understood. When the structure of a sentence is involved in no obscurity, we can easily put together by the help of a Lexicon a set of words in one language corresponding to a set of words in another. But the correspondence will not necessarily be such, that the meaning expressed by the translator shall be the meaning intended by the author. The meaning of words is purely conventional ; their connexion with the notions which they convey is founded in the practice or the usage of those who speak the language to which the words belong. In a living language this usage is known from conversation. But in a dead language it can be discovered only by reading ; and therefore the fewer books we have in that language, the more circumscribed will be our means of discovering what was the usage of it when it was spoken. Now the Old Testament is the only work which remains in the ancient Hebrew ; nor have we any thing like a Lexicon or Glossary composed while it was a living language. Indeed it ceased to be a living language so long ago as the Babylonish captivity ; for Jerusalem

was re-built by Jews who were born in Chaldea, and who returned to the country of their ancestors with the language of their conquerors.

Let us now consider what rules must be observed in the investigation of words, in order to make them perform the office for which they were intended, and become signs to the hearer or reader of what was thought by the speaker or writer.

Whether we speak or whether we write, it is in either case our object to be understood. Every author therefore must be supposed to employ such words for the conveyance of his thoughts, as he believes will excite in his readers the same thoughts. Otherwise he defeats his own object. His words will be fallacious signs; they will be signs of one thing to the writer, of another thing to the reader; and whether they convey a true or convey a false proposition, they will not convey what the reader wants to know, the proposition of the author. Hence also he must be supposed to use his words in the same sense, in which they are commonly used by the persons who speak the language in which he writes. For if he uses them in any other sense, they will again be signs of one thing to the writer, of another to the reader.

To interpret therefore a word in any language, (whoever be the author that used it,) we must ask in the first instance; What notion is (or was) affixed to that word by the persons in general who speak (or spake) the language? And the answer to this question will constitute our *first* rule of interpretation. Now the question when applied to a living language is easily answered, because the usage of a living language is known

from conversation. But when it is applied to a dead language of which the usage can be learnt only from books, the answer may involve very extensive inquiries. —But whatever be our means of answering the question, that answer will in general determine our interpretation of words, as it determines in general an author's application of them. The rules themselves therefore, which we are now considering, may be explained without reference to any particular language. But on the other hand, we must not forget that they apply only to the words of an original. For when we interpret a translation, the words which we investigate are signs to the reader of what was thought by the translator. They may or they may not be signs of what was thought by the author.

It has been already observed, that authors must in general use their words in the sense in which they are generally understood; and that hence is derived our first rule of interpretation. But how, it may be asked, is the rule to be applied if a word has various senses? Is not such a word an ambiguous sign? And must not the application of the rule be attended in this case with uncertainty? Now if a word has various senses, it will undoubtedly be a sign of one thing in one place, of another thing in another place. But it is no necessary consequence, that the word is an ambiguous sign. Its senses, however different, may be distinctly marked by the relation of that word to other words with which it is connected in a sentence. And as in cases where a word has only one sense, that sense is determined by usage; in like manner, where a word has various senses, each single sense will be determined by usage. But

then the question above-proposed must be restricted to the particular case. And instead of asking indefinitely, what notion was affixed to the word by the persons in general who spake the language, we must ask; what notion did they affix to it in that particular connexion.

Should a doubt however remain where a word has various senses, that doubt may be frequently removed by the application of another rule, which is likewise founded on the principle that words are signs to the reader of what was thought by the writer. As the general meaning of words depends on general usage, so their particular application may depend on the particular situation of the persons to whom they were immediately addressed. We may lay it down therefore as a *second* rule of interpretation, that the meaning of a word used by any writer is the meaning which was affixed to it by those for whom he immediately wrote. For if a writer addressing himself in the first instance to particular persons or communities does not adapt his expressions to the mode in which they are likely to apply them, he will fail to be understood by the very persons for whose immediate benefit he wrote. When St Paul, for instance, composed an Epistle to any particular community, whether at Rome, at Corinth, at Ephesus, or any other place, he undoubtedly used such expressions, as well as such arguments, as he knew would be understood by that community. And as he intended to be understood by that community, so and no otherwise did he intend to be understood by all other readers, whether in the first or in the nineteenth century. Now in order to discover the meaning ascribed to St Paul's expressions by

any particular community to which he wrote, we must make ourselves acquainted with the peculiar situation of that community. We must understand the opinions which they maintained on the subjects on which St Paul addressed them ; or the expressions which he employed in the correction or confutation of those opinions may be understood by us in a different manner from that in which they understood his expressions, and consequently in a different manner from that in which St Paul meant them to be understood. For if he had not expressed himself so as to be understood by those whose religious errors it was his immediate object to remove, his immediate object would not have been attained.

Again, as the situation and circumstances of the original readers afford frequently a clue to an author's meaning, so on the other hand, his own situation and circumstances are not less necessary to be taken into the account. We may lay it down therefore as a *third* rule of interpretation, that the words of an author must be so explained as not to make them inconsistent with his known character, his known sentiments, his known situation, and the known circumstances of the subject on which he wrote.

To judge of the utility of these rules, let us take a case of interpretation which is very common and where the want of them is especially felt. When a word has various senses, it often happens that more than one of them will so far suit the context as to afford some sort of meaning to the passage. In such a case an expounder of the Bible takes the liberty of exercising his own discretion ; and this discretion is commonly so exercised

as to make the author mean what the expounder wishes him to have meant. Instead of considering the situation of the author, the expounder contemplates his own situation. Instead of considering the situation of those whom the author addressed, the expounder contemplates those whom he himself is addressing. Instead of inquiring into the opinions which it was the author's object to confute, he concerns himself only with those opinions which it is his own object to confute. In this manner does he divert the author's meaning from its original purpose, and by torturing his words, or rather the words of his translator, he contrives to extract from them a meaning which they were not intended to convey. But let us ask, in the name of common sense, whether it be possible to interpret an author as he ought to be interpreted without due attention to the preceding rules. Suppose that an ancient author has written on a point of controversy. Will any man venture to assert, that such an author can be understood by those who are ignorant of the subject and circumstances of the controversy? Take, for instance, the controversial parts of St Paul's writings, and see the consequence of expounding them without a knowledge of the subject and circumstances. What was the chief controversy which engaged the attention of St Paul? It was a controversy between the Jewish converts and the Heathen converts. The Jewish converts attached to their former institutions contended that the Law of Moses should be united with the Faith of Christ. Had this proposition been true, the Heathen converts would have been only imperfect Christians; and in order to obtain the perfection required of them by the Jewish con-

verts they must have submitted to the rites enjoined by the Levitical Law. The question therefore at issue between them was simply this ; whether a man could become a good Christian without remaining or becoming a Jew ? This question, which was then of the highest importance, St Paul has discussed, especially in his Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians, where he has decided the question in the affirmative. But the question there decided is very different from any question, which now agitates the religious world ; for no man would now suppose, that the best Christians are they who have been Jews. Yet how seldom do we find an interpreter of St Paul, who keeps in view the subject and circumstances of that controversy on which St Paul himself was writing ? Men interpret his Epistles, as if he were a writer of the present age ; and passages, relating solely to the question at issue between Jewish and Heathen converts are so explained, as if the Apostle had been sitting in judgment to decide between Calvin and Arminius.

The rules of interpretation which apply to human authors are still applicable, when Scripture is referred to the Holy Spirit as its author. For in whatever manner we suppose that inspiration was communicated and whatever degree of agency we ascribe to the writers themselves, we shall find that the words of Scripture must be still interpreted by the same rules as those which apply to the words of merely human authors. If the sacred writers were so inspired, that while their knowledge was suggested to them the mode of committing that knowledge to writing was left to their own discretion, the words which they employed for that pur-

pose must evidently be interpreted as their words, and consequently by the rules above described. Nor will the conclusion be different, if the words were inspired. For if the words themselves were dictated by the Holy Spirit, the choice of those words must have been determined by the same rules as if they had been chosen by the sacred writers. The choice of them must have equally depended on their common usage in the intercourse between man and man. If they had not been so chosen, they would not have been understood by man. They would not have conveyed to the reader what was thought by the author, and the object of revelation would not have been attained.

CHANGES IN THE MEANING OF SCRIPTURAL EXPRESSIONS.

A disposition has often been shown among Christians to regard the language of the Bible as suiting in each minute particular every age, every condition, every circumstance of the world, and just as applicable to the existing state of things now as at the first moment of its promulgation. This is wrong in itself, and pernicious in its effects. It contradicts the first principles of sound interpretation, which require that in order to understand any author we should refer to the circumstances under which he wrote, the object he proposed, the people he addressed, and the prevailing opinions, customs,

institutions, of his age. And it leads directly, as the history of the Christian church proves, to the establishment and perpetuity of errors of doctrine and practice. It becomes us to feel the propriety and the necessity of exercising our reason and judgment, and of calling in the light of history and fair criticism to help us, in the study of the Scriptures equally with our study of any other books which relate in as great a degree to past ages.

To illustrate the necessity of this course, I will bring some instances of words and phrases of frequent recurrence in the New Testament, which a little consideration will show cannot have a like application to us of the present day; belonging; as it will appear, to the state of things then in existence, and having a special bearing upon the position of Christianity at its first institution in reference to the state either of Jews or of Heathens of that age.

The first thing which occurs is what meets us in the preaching of the Baptist as the forerunner of Christ, and in the earliest preaching of Christ himself. Both began by calling their hearers to 'repent, for the kingdom of heaven was at hand.' The word repent does not sufficiently express the sense of the original; it should be rendered—*reform*. Repentance primarily implies only sorrow for past misconduct; reformation primarily implies a change from a bad moral course to a good one. This alone is no unimportant fact; for the use of the word 'repent' in this connexion has tended to impress some minds with a belief that mere sorrow for past sins had within it a saving efficacy, when the truth is that nothing less is required than thorough, persevering reformation. The call then of the Baptist and of

the Saviour was addressed to Jews ; and what were they called to reform ? They had corrupted their national religion by human traditions and observances, and yet esteeming themselves the peculiar favorites of Heaven were expecting in their Messiah a temporal prince, who should mount the throne of their most renowned monarch David, and going forth as their leader with all the success of a conqueror should redeem them from Gentile oppression and make them the lords of the earth. To such notions the first response of the new dispensation was, repent, reform. The Jews were called to humble their national pride, to purify their corrupted religion, to recall the spiritual worship of Jehovah, and forsake the superstitions and traditions which they were observing at the time of Christ's advent. It is plain then, that when we use the words 'repentance' and 'reformation,' we must give them in reference to those who have been born and bred under Christian influences a different shade of meaning. We must apply them to sins of every kind which subsist in such various forms among men, and which do so much towards weakening and destroying the power and the blessings of our religion.

Again ; the rite of baptism, and the word itself, cannot now, except in very few instances, be considered and used as at the time when the Scriptures were written. Then only converts to the new religion were baptized ; and only those of course were converts, who were made so by the force of evidence, by conviction ; and such conviction would be very likely to produce a wonderful change for the better, or a reformation of life and conduct. Thus we read that 'Simon believed and was baptized.' Acts, viii. 13. And so frequently in the

Acts. Accordingly when a man consented to be baptized he was to be considered converted and sincerely converted, and consequently in a fair way to be saved. Our Savior promised, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,'* in perfect correspondence with these views; and such was the baptism for the remission of sins, to which St Peter called the Jews on the day of Pentecost. But apply the same sense in all its fulness to the rite or to its name now, (I speak of course of already established Christian churches,) and to what absurdities should we be led? Here no conversion to Christianity, to a new religion is supposed, nor is it possible. The gospel, thanks be to God, is our earliest inheritance; we imbibe it with our infant nourishment, it surrounds our very cradles, it guides our childhood, it prompts our prayers, it inspires our hopes; and when baptism is administered in infancy or to those of maturer years, it is but the recognition by Christian parents or Christian adults, before God and man, of the faith in which they themselves have been born and in which they desire that their children and themselves may live and die. These considerations applied to Scripture phraseology connected with the ordinance of baptism at once show, that great care and much qualification are necessary in the use of such language at the present day.

Again; we find in Scripture, that Christians are styled 'elect'—'saints'—'called'; they are said to be 'in Christ;' St Peter describes them as 'a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people.'† But in what sense was this? And have we any right, or is it at all proper for us to apply it to

* Mark xvi. 16. † 1 Pet. ii. 9.

Christians now in the same sense? Recollect that these words and phrases were applied by the sacred writers to the whole body of Christians; and if we are to use them in like manner, we must apply them to the whole body of Christians now existing throughout the world. We recur then to the days of these writers, and we find that those whom they addressed were united among themselves as one body, but separated by the broadest lines of difference from the unconverted Jews or Heathens, i. e. from the rest of the world. Different principles of conduct, different doctrines of religion in almost every respect, peculiar modes of worship marked them as essentially differing from all other men. We find them too living purer lives, for to this point we have heathen testimony; and indulging hopes and expectations which could raise them above the world, render powerless the weapons of persecution, and destroy all fear of torture, deprivation and death. Well might they be addressed, or spoken of, by the titles we have quoted; which, with all their apparently remarkable honor and dignity, really served only appropriately to distinguish the Christians from the world about them. The Jews called all other nations, Gentiles or Heathens; the polite Greeks called all other nations Barbarians; and so the sacred writers styled the converts to the new faith by the epithets and phrases above named.

Again; the inspired writers were strongly impressed with that grand purpose of God's providence, which was to result in the bringing in of the Gentiles, or people of every nation and kindred under heaven, to be his people in the place of one particular and favored but now rejected nation. They themselves had been brought up Jews,

with all the prejudices of Jews, accustomed to look upon all who were without the pale of the Mosaic economy as necessarily by that very fact destitute of the favor of God, and disposed at first to believe that the new dispensation was also to be confined to them. Gradually, very gradually, their eyes were opened to the true light; the darkness which had obscured their moral and mental light was dispersed, and they beheld the 'fulness of time' approaching, nay arrived, when the universal Father would 'gather together in one all things in Christ' and admit all his children to participate equally in the blessings and privileges of the Messiah's kingdom. Their minds were full of this magnificent vision, their national prejudices had yielded, and the enlarged charity of the new faith occupied their place. All this operated to draw from them another kind of phraseology applicable to this subject, and they wrote and spoke of this scheme of the divine operations as what God did 'foreknow before the foundation of the world,' as what 'he did predestinate,' as 'the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.' Accordingly too they addressed the Christian converts as being 'chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world,' 'predestinated,' 'elect according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father.' Now from all this, which is so perfectly plain in itself, has been built up a doctrine which would teach that the future happiness or misery of every individual has been fixed from all eternity, wholly independent of ourselves or of any thing we can do. Why is this? and how has it happened? Plainly from a want of reference to the real occasion and object for which the Apostles wrote. Language, which was originally

applied without reserve or qualification to the whole community of Christians, has been so limited as to embrace only a very small portion of those who profess the name of Christ.

I will adduce only one more example; we find very remarkable language used in the New Testament to designate the change either from Judaism or Heathenism to Christianity. And in order to feel the full force of it, and for our guidance in the use of it, we must again recur to the state of things at the first preaching of the gospel. Look first at the Jews, and see what was required of them in order to become Christians. Nothing less than a most extraordinary moral and intellectual change. They were to acknowledge themselves deceived in the proudest and dearest of their nation's hopes, and in the place of a victorious conqueror were to receive as their Messiah one of humble parentage, from the most despised corner of the most despised district of the land, whose claims were disavowed by their priests and Rabbins, and who neither affected nor displayed any earthly power. Instead of the splendor of their ancient monarchs restored with fresh, nay superior lustre, which was to be reflected in a rich profusion of wealth and honors upon his followers, they were asked to become the disciples of one who confessed that he had not where to lay his head, and who at the very moment when he invited their allegiance declared to them, 'He who killeth you will think he doeth God's service!' The hope of Israel, as he claimed to be, proclaimed that his favor was for Gentiles as well as Jews. As if to make the discordance between the expectations of the nation and the reality more glaring, he declared to them the dis-

pleasure of God, he called them to repentance and reformation, and he hesitated not to denounce their very priests and rulers—the men they most honored. 'To the haughty Pharisee the language of him from whom he had expected advancement and favor was, 'Wo unto you hypocrite!' To the ambitious Jew who was bending under the Gentile yoke the lesson was, 'Blessed are the meek, and the poor in spirit!' To all classes, 'If any one will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me!' Can we conceive of any change of views, feelings, hopes, expectations, in short of character or all which forms it, greater than what was necessary to transmute the aspiring Jew into the humble, devoted disciple of the lowly Jesus? And when this change was effected, do the bold figures by which the sacred writers express the change appear extravagant? Was it too much to call it regeneration or a new birth?

Look now at the Gentiles or Heathens, and consider what their conversion to Christianity required. It was a change even more radical than that from Judaism. They were to adopt a religion in every respect different from any of which they had a conception. It was offered to them by a few individuals from a degraded, despised and enslaved nation, who were scorned by most of their own countrymen. It required them to give up their idolatrous worship, and substitute the spiritual worship of one supreme and only God. It taught them their sin and its guilt, of which before they had no idea, and it discoursed to them of virtues and rewards of which they were equally ignorant. It offered them a new faith, a new hope, a new rule of conduct; and it

carried their minds forward from the concerns, pleasures and associations of this life to embrace the august and solemn incidents belonging to the Christian futurity. Finally, it taught them that they inherited a responsibility of which they had never known, of which they could not divest themselves, and upon which depended the awful realities of their eternal condition. What language could be too strong to describe the change which would result to a Heathen by a full admission of the new faith? Accordingly the writers of the Epistles, which principally concern such a conversion, speak of it as a 'regeneration' or new birth, as being 'born again of God and the spirit,' as being 'dead to sin' and 'alive from the dead.' 'This it was that St. Paul meant, by being 'buried with Christ in baptism, and raised together with him,' by being 'a new creature.' It was a change from a state of slavery to that of 'the adoption of sons,' from being 'strangers and foreigners to being fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of faith.' In such striking and figurative language do the sacred writers describe or designate the conversion of the Gentiles to Christianity. And can we suppose that there is any propriety in applying the same language in all its original force, and in precisely the same sense, to any change which every individual born and educated in a Christian land under Christian influences and institutions must sensibly undergo, before he can be saved?

More examples of Scripture language which is equally inapplicable, without qualification, to the state of things now existing might be quoted;—but I forbear. The conclusion is obvious;—that we should be careful in

our use of Scripture language not to mislead ourselves nor others ; always remembering that the Bible was written in a remote age ; that the history it contains is of events which occurred in a remote age and in distant countries ; and that the didactic and epistolary portions of the New Testament in particular had a primary and peculiar reference to the condition of the persons to whom they were addressed.

F. A. FARLEY.

THE PARTICULARITY OF THE GOSPELS.

The common reader of the New Testament is sometimes disposed to ask, how it comes that the Evangelists exhibit so particular and intimate a knowledge of the things which they relate, especially of those events of which they could hardly have been eye or ear witnesses ? To this question the following remarks may be pertinent.

It is characteristic of all narrators simple and uncultivated as were the sacred historians, that they give a scenic or dramatic form to their relations. In accordance with this peculiarity they commonly tell us just what was said upon the occasion which they are describing, when more accomplished writers would very briefly state the fact. To give an instance or two from St Matthew. ' When Pilate was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have

thou nothing to do with that just man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.' Matt. xxvii. 19. Again, 'Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss that same is he; hold him fast.' Matt. xxvi. 48. Again in the book of Acts, xxvi. 31. 'And when they were gone aside they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds.' I adduce these examples not as the most striking but as most readily occurring. Similar instances abound on almost every page of Scripture. Now in cases of this sort, it is altogether improbable that the narrator could have heard what he tells us was said. Nor is it necessary to suppose that the precise words uttered upon the occasions referred to are intended to be given. It is an ample account of the matter, to observe that this is the customary mode of narration among those with whom the art of writing is in its infancy. Before the mind is cultivated, before it has become rich and copious in language, it endeavors in the communication of thought to address the eye and the ear. It makes great use of the imagination. 'The faults of Herodotus,' says the Edinburgh Review, 'are the faults of a simple and imaginative mind. Children and servants are remarkably Herodotean in their style of narration. They tell every thing dramatically. Their *says he* and *says she* are proverbial. Every person who has had to settle their disputes knows that, even when they have no intention to deceive, their reports of conversation always require to be carefully sifted. If an educated man were giving an account of the late change of administration, he would say, 'Lord Goderich resigned;

and the King in consequence sent for the Duke of Wellington.' A porter tells the story as if he had been hid behind the curtains of the royal bed at Windsor: 'So Lord Goderich says, "I cannot manage this business; I must go out." So the King says—says he, "Well then, I must send for the Duke of Wellington—that's all." ' This is in the very manner of the father of history.* The illustration here adduced is a familiar one, but it is nevertheless apt and it serves to elucidate a trait common to all those parts of the Bible which are historical, and which are the productions either of a primitive age or of minds unused to literary composition. In both cases the modes of narration always approaches to a dramatic form. The circumstances related by St Matthew in the passages above cited would have been told by a more experienced writer somewhat after this manner; 'When Pilate was upon the judgment seat he received a message from his wife, warning him not to condemn Jesus as she had had a remarkable dream about him.' And again, 'He who betrayed Jesus agreed with them that he would point out the person they were to apprehend by kissing him.'

An example of a similar style of writing may be brought from the Old Testament. In Gen. i. 26, we read, 'And God said, let us make man in our image, &c.' Nobody imagines that God actually spoke. And it is equally clear, I conceive, that he did not consult any other being. According to the poetic and imaginative style of the early period when this account of the creation was written, God is described as speaking, as ad-

*Edinburgh Review, No. xciv, Art. History.

dressing directly the objects created. But when the historian comes to the creation of man, he shows his sense of the dignity of man and his superiority to the other works of God, by representing the Deity as planning this his best work before he created it. To express this latter idea, God must be introduced as *telling* what he is about to do ; and if so, then such a form of speech must be adopted as would imply the presence of some being or beings to whom the plans of the Divine Mind were communicated, otherwise all the effect of representing the Deity as speaking would to an imaginative mind seem to be lost. The idea of the dignity of human nature, which is thus poetically expressed in the Mosaic account of the creation, is also expressed by the philosopher Seneca, with precisely that difference in the mode of expressing it which we should expect between writers of such different degrees of cultivation. 'Cogitavit nos ante Natura quam fecit.' 'Nature paused before she made us.'*

It is hardly necessary to observe that these remarks do not touch the credit of the facts related in the Gospels. They refer only to the mode in which these facts are stated ; and which if we were now to open the New Testament for the first time would seem to us more remarkable than it can appear after years of familiar acquaintance. So far from weakening, they are fitted to increase our confidence in the sacred historians, who are proved by the simplicity of their style of narration to have been incapable of a literary fraud.

W. H. FURNESS.

* See Le Clerc's note on this passage, Comment. in V. T.

IRREVERENT USE OF SCRIPTURE.

In an historical work which I was reading the other day I met with a passage which deserves attention not only from the justness of its sentiment, but from the circumstance that it comes from a source which cannot be suspected of professional bias. I am glad to bring it under the eye of some who may not see the book* where it appears.

‘There are few transgressions more seductive to us all, than that disrespectful treatment of the word of God, which is to all intents and purposes a breach of the third commandment; and we are therefore bound to guard ourselves against the error with the most watchful care. It is of the greatest importance that we should resist the temptation, frequently so strong, of annexing a familiar, facetious or irreverent idea to a scriptural usage, a scriptural expression, a scripture text, or a scripture name. Nor should we hold ourselves guiltless, though we may have been misled by mere negligence or want of reflection. Every person of good taste will avoid reading a parody or a travestie of a beautiful poem, because the recollection of the degraded likeness will always obtrude itself upon our memories when we wish to derive pleasure from the contemplation of the elegance of the original. But how much more urgent is the duty, by which we are bound to keep the pages of the Bible clear of any impression tending to diminish the blessing of habitual respect and reverence towards our Maker’s law.’

*‘History of England. Vol. I. Anglo-Saxon Period. By Francis Palgrave F. R. S. London 1831.’ It was published as the 21st volume of the Family Library.

TRANSLATION AND EXPOSITION.

MATTHEW V. 33—48.

Part of the Sermon on the Mount.

33 Again; ye have heard that it was said to the
men of former times, Thou shalt not swear falsely
34 but shalt fulfil to the Lord thine oaths. But I
say to you, Swear not all; neither by the heaven,
35 for it is the throne of God; nor by the earth,
for it is his footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is
36 the city of the great King; nor shalt thou swear
by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair, white
37 or black. But let your language be—yea, yea;
nay, nay; for whatever exceeds this, is of the evil
one.

38 Ye have heard that it has been said, Eye for
39 eye, and tooth for tooth. But I say to you, Re-
sist not the aggressor. But whoever shall strike
thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other.
40 And to one who will engage thee in a law-suit and
41 take thy tunic, give up also thy cloak. And who-
ever shall require thy service for a mile, go with
42 him two. Give to him who asks of thee; and turn
not away from him who would borrow of thee.

43 Ye have heard that it has been said, Thou shalt
44 love thy neighbor and shalt hate thine enemy. But
I say to you, Love your enemies, bless them who
curse you, do good to them who hate you, and
pray for them who calumniate and persecute you;

45 that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven ; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain to the righteous and the un-
 46 righteous. If indeed you should love them who love you, what reward could you have ? Do not
 47 even the publicans the same ? And if you should salute your brethren only, what peculiar to yourselves would you do ? Do not even the Gentiles
 48 the same ? Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father who is in heaven is perfect.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

Jesus proceeds in his exposure of the imperfect views of morality which prevailed among the Jews, and unfolds by examples of contrast the far higher requisitions of his religion.

V. 33. The passages of the Law on this subject may be found in Exod. xx. 7, Levit. xix. 21, Deut. xxiii. 21, 23.—The most corrupt practice in regard to oaths was common among the Jews, whose teachers sanctioned such wickedness by the distinction which they attempted to establish, between oaths in which the name of God was used and oaths in which he was not named in direct terms. On another occasion Christ quoted some examples of their vicious sophistry respecting the obligation of an oath ; see Matthew xxiii. 16, 18.

'*Thou shalt not swear falsely.*' The original may mean either to take an oath which he who swears knows at the time to be false, or to disregard and break an oath which was made with an honest intention, or it may and probably here does include both these kinds of false swearing.

'*Shalt fulfil to the Lord thine oaths ;*' or, shalt pay to the Lord thine oaths. This is the verbal rendering of

the Greek; which I have given, because I doubt whether Jesus did not mean to intimate his knowledge of the doctrine just mentioned, that an oath by the name of the Lord was of stronger force than any other. The words might be more freely rendered—Thou shalt religiously observe thine oaths.

V. 34. '*Swear not at all.*' It seems very plain, that our Lord did not have in view judicial oaths, nor oaths that might be taken on subjects and at seasons the solemnity of which would render an appeal to the Supreme Being appropriate and proper; but those frequent and familiar oaths which were allowed in the conversation of the Jews, and are still heard to the disgrace of Christian communities. The character of these verses shows that such an interpretation should be given to our Lord's command. Oaths, moreover, were prescribed and were recorded in the Old Testament, (see particularly Deut. vi. 13, x. 20.); when the high-priest 'adjured Jesus by the living God,' though he had before been silent, he answered his inquiry, (Matt. xxvi. 63, 64.); and Paul repeatedly uses the most awful form of oath, (2 Cor. i. 23, xi. 31.)

Vs. 34, 35. *The heaven is called the throne of God and the earth his footstool* in Isaiah lxvi. 1, and *Zion or Jerusalem is described as the city of the great King* in Psalm xlviii. 2. Jesus may have meant to recall these passages in their Scriptures to the minds of his hearers. The forms of oath on which he here remarks were common with the Jews. See what he again said on this subject, in Matt. xxiii. 20—22.

V. 36. *Thou canst not make one hair, white or black.* i. e. thou canst not create a single hair, whether for the head of age or of youth. Inability not to change the color of the hair but to produce it is, I believe, the fact here brought into view.

Our Lord in these three verses (34—36) declares that every oath is a virtual appeal to God, since he is the source of all existence and power, and whenever we swear by his creatures or works we swear by him whose they are and on whom they depend.

V. 37. '*Let your language be—yea, yea; nay, nay.*' i. e. let your habits of speech be of this kind, viz. your assertion a simple affirmation and your denial a simple declaration; add no oath to confirm either. The Apostle James probably had these words of his Master in mind, James v. 12; and his language supports this interpretation of them. St Paul, when he uses similar terms in 2 Cor, i. 17, 18, is speaking on another subject, sincerity; their use therefore in that instance does not determine the manner in which they should be construed here.

'*The evil one.*' So I apprehend the Greek should be rendered; for whatever be our belief concerning the existence of Satan, there can be no doubt that Jesus, whether in accommodation to Jewish modes of conception and speech or from knowledge of the fact, was accustomed to speak of 'the devil,' 'the evil one,' as a real being.—Whatever *exceeds* or goes beyond simple affirmation or denial is of such doubtful, dangerous or wicked character, that it may be accounted among the productions of him who is considered the author of evil.

V. 38. The next example of the low state of Jewish morality is founded on the law of retaliation. The instructions of Moses on this subject will be found in Exod. xxi. 24, 25, Levit. xxiv. 19, 20, Deut. xix. 21.—There are two ways of explaining the remarkable language of Jesus which follows. One is to interpret his expressions literally, in the belief that they were meant to apply in their original force to the disciples only during the first age of Christianity, when sacrifice and martyrdom were the price of constancy in the faith. The other is to understand

them as strong, hyperbolical descriptions or illustrations of the temper which Christians should always exhibit—a temper of mildness and forbearance, of peace and forgiveness. In either view of their immediate purpose, Dr Paley's remarks, in his *Evidences*, (Part II. chap. 2.) are correct, 'It is incidental to this mode of instruction [that adopted by Jesus Christ,] which proceeds not by proof but upon authority, not by disquisition but by precept, that the rules will be conceived in absolute terms leaving the application and the distinctions that attend it to the reason of the hearer. Though they appear in the form of specific precepts, they are intended as descriptive of disposition and character. A specific compliance with the precepts would be of little value; but the disposition which they inculcate is of the highest.' That our Lord did not mean to enjoin a tame submission to insult, is apparent from his own expostulation when struck by one of the officers in presence of the high-priest, John xviii. 22, 23; and that Paul did not receive his words in that sense appears from his language on a similar occasion, Acts xxiii. 2, 3. It should be remembered that Jesus is cautioning his disciples against *retaliation of injuries*, which is so contrary to the spirit of his religion and so pernicious in its consequences that it is better to endure some evils, to experience some loss, even to make a temporary surrender of our rights than, by resorting to like means of resistance with those which the ill-disposed would use for our injury, to inflame passion, kindle strife and bring greater suffering both on ourselves and on them. This is the substance, if it be not the exact meaning of the instruction given in this paragraph (verses 38—42.) Words of the same import may be found in Prov. xx. 22, xxiv. 29, Rom. xii. 17, 19, 1 Cor. vi. 7, 1 Thess. v. 15, 1 Peter iii. 9.

V. 40. '*Thy tunic.*' The dress of the Orientals was in the time of Jesus, as it still is, very different from ours. The *tunic* was the under garment which covered the body

from the neck to the knees, after the manner of a laborer's frock among us, and was confined around the waist by a girdle. The *cloak* (as we translate the Greek name for want of a better word) was a loose mantle-like kind of garment, which was wrapped round the body or thrown over the shoulders as comfort or convenience required, and served as a covering by night as well for clothing by day. In Luke the order of the terms is reversed—'him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also.' Luke vi. 29.

V. 41. '*Shall require thy service for a mile.*' The Greek word translated 'shall require thy service' is of Persian origin, and was derived from a custom which arose under the kings of Persia, that carriers travelling on royal or public business might demand whatever assistance they needed from any one whom they met, which no one was permitted to refuse.

V. 42. Compare Luke vi. 30; also Rom. xii. 20, and Deut. xv. 8. The connexion shows that this precept was given with a special reference to the wants of those whom we might consider ourselves released from an obligation to assist by their harsh treatment of us. The connexion of the words in Luke renders this still more evident. 'Love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend hoping for nothing again.' Luke vi. 35.

V. 43. '*Thou shalt love thy neighbor and shalt hate thine enemy.*' The former clause is found in Levit. xix. 18, but nothing like the latter appears in the Jewish Law, excepting in those passages which enjoined perpetual and destructive hostility towards the Canaanites; see, for example, Deut. vii. 2, xxiii. 6. From such passages however the later Jews attempted to justify an exclusive and vindictive spirit, which they manifested to so great a degree as to incur the censure even of a heathen historian. Jesus alludes therefore to traditionary and not to written maxims.

V. 44. For similar counsels see Luke vi. 27, 28, Rom.

xii. 14, 21, 1 Pet. iii. 9; and for examples mark the prayer of Jesus on the cross (Luke xxiii. 34), and of Stephen at his martyrdom (Acts vii. 60), and the account which Paul gives of the conduct of the Apostles under their persecutions, 1 Cor. iv. 12, 13.

'*Bless*,' '*curse*.' These words being set in contrast determine the meaning of each other. To curse is to wish or call down evil, to bless therefore is to wish or call down good.

V. 45. '*Sons of your Father who is in heaven*.' In Ephes. v. 1. we have the same sentiment expressed in other words, where the Apostle after speaking of the duties of kindness and forgiveness adds, 'Be ye therefore followers [or imitators] of God as dear children.' The example of the Deity, who sends his gifts upon all men, is still more strongly presented in the parallel passage in Luke vi. 35; 'For he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.'

V. 46. '*What reward could you have?*' Compare Matt. v. 12. What claim could you urge either to the favor of God or to the reverence of men? You show yourselves no better than those whom you esteem unworthy of divine or human regard.

'*The publicans*'—the tax-gatherers. The revenue which was collected for the Roman government was most reluctantly paid by the Jews, who could not endure the yoke of foreign power. Those of their countrymen therefore who were employed in collecting the taxes were very odious, and were stigmatized by terms of bitter reproach, as emphatically and distinctively '*sinners*.' Of this state of the public sentiment there are many proofs in the Gospels. See Matt. ix. 11, xviii. 17, Luke vii. 34. The publicans probably were guilty of injustice and extortion, but that they were not all of so bad character is plain from the fact that Matthew and Zaccheus belonged to this class.

V. 47. '*Salute*.' Salutations are more significant expressions of good-will in the East than with us. Both their

manner and their meaning entitle them to more consideration. Compare Matt. x. 12, and Luke x. 5.

'*The Gentiles*'—the Heathens, whom the Jews almost held in abhorrence. The common version has 'publicans' instead of 'Gentiles,' but the latter reading has the better support from manuscripts.

V. 48. *Be ye then perfect, &c.* The purpose of the preceding verses limits the meaning of the term 'perfect' in this place. It refers not so much to general character as to that particular feature of generosity or benevolence which Jesus had been recommending; but which indeed can exist in perfection only where the whole character is brought under the control of Christian principles. In Luke the charge is, 'Be ye therefore *merciful*, as your Father also is merciful.' Luke vi. 36. The instruction which our Saviour would give is this; Aspire to a resemblance of that perfect goodness which you venerate in God, who never discovers a selfish or vindictive disposition, but sends down blessings upon the ungrateful and wicked as well as upon the devout and obedient.

PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. How directly in the face of these precepts of our Master is that habit of profane swearing, in which so many who bear his name allow themselves to their own great harm and to the discredit of religion. Wherever this practice prevails and on whatever occasion it is permitted to intrude its hateful presence, it deserves unqualified rebuke. If oaths are banished from what is called genteel society and yet are pronounced in the common scenes of life or in moments of passion by those who frequent the higher walks of society, what does such irregular restraint show but that fear of man or respect for woman is stronger than the fear or the love of God? Alas, it is true that public opinion acts more powerfully

than religious principle on many who profess to be disciples of Jesus Christ.

2. The words of Jesus show the fallacy of a distinction which is often maintained in our day, between different kinds of profaneness. Children should be taught the impropriety of those forms of asseveration which are seldom noticed, one of which—‘by heaven,’ is specified by our Lord, which if uttered without thought are worse than foolish, and if pronounced with a consciousness of their meaning assume at once the character of an oath.

3. Let us cultivate habits of simplicity in our speech; and the most effectual course is to cherish the love of truth in our hearts. If we desire only to communicate correct impressions, we shall not wish nor need to enforce what we say by any other appeal than the tacit one which we make to our own characters. He whose word is known to be as good as an oath will have no occasion to confirm his declaration by any other language. Should not this be the reputation, the merited reputation of every Christian?

4. Nothing can be more unequivocal than our Lord's condemnation of a vindictive temper. He teaches us to endure rather than to return injuries, and in language which cannot be mistaken by an honest reader forbids us to cherish resentment. His words may not be interpreted to the letter, but they mean something; and what can they mean, if they do not enjoin forbearance and the love of peace? Yet here again we are compelled to lament the disregard paid in the Christian world to the precepts and the example of him who is its light. Let them who indulge anger, who nourish hostility of feeling towards a fellow-creature, who desire

or allow retaliation of an injury, stand rebuked before the divine instruction of Jesus. Let the young, who have not yet imbibed the spirit of selfish malignity which breathes through so many of the opinions and customs of society, be encouraged by their teachers to protect themselves against its influence by imbuing their souls with that spirit of love which it was the great object of our Master's teaching, the purpose of his life and death, to communicate.

5. In the inculcation of universal benevolence the superiority of our religion shines forth with an original and cloudless splendor. Soaring at once above the national sentiment of the Jew and the narrow conception of the Pagan, it required its disciples to love their enemies and to pray for those from whom they received the worst treatment. What a strain was this to rise from the bosom of a Jewish community. Benevolence was taught to make piety its handmaid in imploring blessings on the authors of its own distress! What a lesson of humanity; what a proof of divinity. Here is one of those internal evidences of the divine origin of Christianity which accumulate upon our notice as we pursue the history of its introduction into our world, till they have formed a mass of proof against which the objections of the infidel are wholly powerless.

6. We are permitted to adopt the example of our heavenly Father as the standard of excellence. Such a privilege should rouse all our powers to exertion and render us jealous of our own faithfulness. If this standard be kept in view we shall never be satisfied with 'any present attainments,' but must always be seeking a closer resemblance to him in whom alone perfection dwells without decay or change.

TRANSLATION AND EXPOSITION.

MATTHEW vi. 1—18.

Part of the Sermon on the Mount.

- 1 Take care not to do your good deeds before
men to be seen by them ; else you have no reward
2 with your Father who is in heaven. When
therefore thou givest alms, do not have a trumpet
sounded before thee, as the hypocrites do in the
synagogues and in the streets, that they may be
extolled by men. Verily I say to you, they receive
3 their reward. But when thou givest alms, let not
4 thy left hand know what thy right hand does ; that
thine alms may be in secret ; and thy Father, who is
beholding in secret, he will recompense thee openly.
5 And when thou prayest, be not like the hypocrites.
For they love to pray standing in the synagogues
and at the corners of the streets, that they may
be seen by men. Verily I say to you, that they
6 receive their reward. But do thou, when thou
prayest, go into thy secret chamber, and having
shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret ;
and thy Father, who is beholding in secret, will
7 recompense thee openly. And when you pray,
use not vain repetitions, like the heathens ; for they
think that they shall be heard for their much
8 speaking. Do not you therefore like them ; for
your Father knows of what things you have need

9 before you ask him. Do you therefore pray after this manner.

Our Father who art in heaven; hallowed be
10 thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done
11 as in heaven so on earth; give us this day our
12 necessary food; and forgive us our offences,
13 as also we forgive them who wrong us; and bring
us not into temptation, but deliver us from the
evil one.

14 For if you forgive men their offences, your
15 heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you
do not forgive men their offences, neither will your
Father forgive your offences.

16 When too you fast, be not, like the hypocrites,
of a gloomy countenance. For they disfigure
their faces, that they may appear to men to be
fasting. Verily I say to you, that they receive their
17 reward. But when thou fastest, anoint thy head
18 and wash thy face; that thou mayst not appear
to men to be fasting, but to thy Father who is in
secret; and thy Father, who is beholding in secret,
will recompense thee.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

Our Lord had said, chapter v. 20, that 'unless the righteousness of his disciples should excel that of the Scribes and Pharisees, they could not enter into the kingdom of heaven;' and having shown the propriety of this remark by examples of the construction put upon many of the Mosaic precepts, he continues the illustration of the same sentiment by referring to the motive which governed the

Scribes and Pharisees in their religious acts, and which being such as convicted them of hypocrisy must be discarded by those who followed his instructions. He brings three examples of the presence of a corrupt motive, viz. in almsgiving, in prayer, and in fasting.

V. 1. '*Your good deeds.*' Instead of the Greek word which the translators of the common version rendered 'alms' in this verse, the original text probably had the word which in Matt. v. 20 is translated 'righteousness,' and may here be rendered 'good deeds.' This first verse is then an introduction to all which follows to the 19th; containing a general remark, of which three specifications are given. On another occasion Jesus said expressly of the Scribes and Pharisees, 'all their works they do to be seen of men,' Matt. xxiii. 5. It should be observed, that our Lord is not condemning the publicity of good deeds, but the performance of them from a desire of praise. It is often a duty to bring both our charity and our devotion into public view, (see Matt. v. 16), but the Pharisees courted the notice of others, and thrust even private acts of religion before the eyes of men.

V. 2. '*Do not have a trumpet sounded before thee.*' There is no evidence that the Pharisees literally caused a trumpet to be blown when they intended to distribute alms to the poor, or that the recipient of their charity blew a horn in honor of his benefactor, as is said to have been done in later times by religious mendicants in the East. The expression was probably proverbial, and was applied to one who made a great display of his beneficence, or endeavored to draw attention to every act of liberality. A phrase of similar character, though it is in low repute, is sometimes used among us; when in describing the air of pretension that may have distinguished the mention of a subject, we say that it was introduced with a 'flourish of trumpets.'

'*The hypocrites,*' i. e. the Scribes and Pharisees, who

under a mask of benevolence concealed a deep and artful selfishness. The primitive meaning of the word is, —one who personates an assumed character, who appears to be what he is not.

'They receive their reward,' i. e. in the applause which they seek. This is all that they can obtain; the praise of men, which they can enjoy only in this life. See Luke vi. 24.—The Apostle gives in a positive form the same precept which our Lord here delivers negatively, in Rom. xii. 8; *'he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity.'*

V. 3. *'Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand does.'* This is another proverbial expression, meaning that our charity should be so unostentatious as, if it were possible, to be unknown to ourselves. It has been said that the poor's chest for the reception of alms stood on the *right* side of the entrance to the synagogue, and thence the words would have peculiar beauty in this connexion.

V. 4. *'May be in secret,'*—may be secretly bestowed.

'Who is beholding in secret,'—who is looking down upon thy secret acts, is observing thy private distribution of alms.

'Thy Father—he.' The repetition of the nominative is emphatic.

'Will recompense thee openly.' Compare Luke xiv. 14, and 1 Cor. iv. 5. The source and nature, not the public character, of the recompense, or favor, which God will bestow should induce us to cultivate unobtrusive goodness. The antithetical close of the sentence belongs rather to the manner than to the matter of the instruction which it conveys.

V. 5. The posture adopted by these hypocrites in their worship was not the object of our Lord's rebuke, but the ambitious temper which prompted them to offer their prayers where they might attract the most observation. Neither did Jesus mean to condemn public or social worship, but that ostentation of a devout habit which led the Pharisees to offer their private devotion in the most frequented

buildings and parts of the city. The Jews had their hours for prayer as have the Mahommedans in modern times, and merited the judgment which Christ passed on them by taking care to be in the most public places at these hours, and also by remaining in the attitude of worship for a needless length of time.

V. 6. '*Thy secret chamber;*' an apartment in the upper part of the house appropriated to purposes of retirement,—a private chapel, or oratory. In Matt. xxiv. 26, the same word is rendered in the common version 'secret chambers.' It is again used Luke xii. 3. Compare Isai. xxvi. 20.

'*Who is in secret,*' who is with thee in that secret apartment. Man is shut out, but God is there.

V. 7. '*Vain repetitions.*' The Pagans were wont to accumulate epithets and to repeat the same expressions in addressing the objects of their worship, as if by such mere multiplication of words they could gain the attention of their deities, or as if the divinities of whom they supplicated being ignorant of their wants could be informed or convinced of their necessities only by reiterated cries. See 1 Kings xviii. 26. In one of the comedies of Terence a passage occurs so remarkably in point, that I cannot forbear to copy it.

'Ohe. Jam desine Deos, uxor, gratulando obtundere,
Tuam inventam esse gnatam, nisi illos ex tuo ingenio judicas,
Ut nihil credas intelligere, nisi idem dictum sit centies.'
Heaut. v. i. 6—8.

'Enough; cease, wife, to weary the Gods with thanksgiving for the discovery of your child, unless you judge them by yourself, and suppose they can understand nothing which is not told them a hundred times.'—The sentiment of the text is similar to that of Solomon in Eccles. v. 2. A still more near resemblance to the words of Jesus may be found in the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus vii. 14, 'Make not much babbling when thou prayest.'—That our Lord did

not mean to forbid earnest prayer containing repeated expression of our desires or continued for some time is clear, not only from the parable which he spake, 'that men ought always to pray and not to faint,' (Luke xviii. 1—8), and from various directions given by his Apostles, but from the words which Luke records in immediate connexion with the Lord's prayer (Luke xi. 5—9) and from the example of Jesus, who 'continued all night in prayer to God' (Luke vi. 12), and who in Gethsemane thrice uttered the same petition (Matt. xxvi. 44). They were '*vain repetitions*' which he condemned, of which an ostentatious or superstitious disposition—a belief that 'much speaking' was in itself acceptable to God, and not devotional fervor or conscious need, was the origin.

'*Shall be heard.*' We attach to this word in this connexion the true force of the original, which means not simply to hear, but to hearken to, or to hear with favor.

V. 8. '*Do not you therefore like them.*' Literally,—resemble or imitate them not.

'*Knows of what things you have need.*' See Matt. vi. 32. Luke xii. 30. Jesus did not urge the divine omniscience as a reason why men should not pray, for this duty he enjoined in the plainest terms, (see Matt. vii. 7), but as a reason for discarding the notion that by their importunity they could persuade God that they were in want.

Vs. 9—13. Luke has given this prayer as it was pronounced by Jesus on another occasion. Luke xi. 2—4. It was customary for the Rabbins to deliver forms of prayer to their disciples. Some were long and particular, others brief and intended to express only the main topics, the heads as it were, of supplication. Christ gave such a compend for the use of his disciples, in composing which he borrowed freely from the forms which had been prescribed by the Jewish teachers, and in interpreting which we must affix to the terms the meaning which they had at that time.

V. 9. '*After this manner;*' i. e. let this be your model. Jesus did not mean that they should confine themselves to the words which follow.

Our Father. Is it not worthy of notice that this private prayer,—for of such has Jesus been speaking—a prayer for 'the secret chamber,' should begin with the word, *our*? an acknowledgment of our social nature, of our relation to those who have equally with ourselves a Father in the Object of our worship? Is not this a beautiful intimation, that love to man and love to God should be inseparable?

'*Hallowed be thy name.*' The word 'hallowed' is so familiar to us in this clause, that though we seldom hear it in any other connexion it seems best to retain it. The Greek term is usually rendered sanctified. 'Thy name' is a Hebraism for thou; and to pray that God may be sanctified is to express our desire that he may be held in the reverence which his perfections demand. See this use of the word in 1 Pet. iii. 15; also in the Old Testament, in Numb. xx. 12, Isai. viii. 13, xxix. 23. So Jehovah says, that he will sanctify himself and will sanctify his name, i. e. will make his perfections known in such a manner as to secure the reverence of men, Ezek. xxxvi. 23, xxxviii. 23.

V. 10. '*Thy kingdom come.*' See Matt. iii. 2, iv. 23. The Jews were accustomed to pray for the *kingdom* of heaven, i. e. that the Messiah might appear. Christ taught his disciples to express the same desire, viz. that the dispensation of which he was the head might be established. The Apostles affixed different ideas to this petition when it was given and when they entered on their ministry after the death and ascension of their Master. At first they must have understood it as their education in the opinions and hopes of their countrymen would alone permit them to receive it, as a prayer for the temporal reign of the Messiah. Such notions of his kingdom we know they retained even

after his resurrection. (Acts i. 6.) But when afterwards they comprehended the spiritual character of his reign, they would use this petition as a prayer for the establishment of his religion.

'Thy will be done,' &c. This is a twofold petition; thy will be done both *by* and *upon* the inhabitants of heaven and of earth.

V. 11. *'Our necessary food.'* The Greek term for 'necessary' is found in no writer before the time of the Evangelists, and its meaning can be gathered only from its etymology. On this ground it has been rendered 'super-substantial,' that is, (as some undertake to explain it,) spiritual. Others suppose that it refers to the subsequent day, and that the petition asks for the means of subsistence through tomorrow or through the future part of our lives. But by far the most probable derivation would suggest the meaning given in the text, 'necessary,' that which is at once needful and sufficient for the supply of our wants. Similar to this was the prayer of Agur, 'Feed me with food convenient for me,' Prov. xxx. 8.—The Greek word for food in this verse is usually translated 'bread,' but it was used as a general term for whatever might be eaten. In Luke this petition is, 'give us day by day,' &c.

V. 12. *'Forgive us our offences as also we forgive them who wrong us.'* The literal rendering is that of our common version—'forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.' And since God can justly claim from us entire obedience to his commands, every sin may be accounted a debt which we have incurred, and which, as we cannot pay it having no superfluous righteousness that may be placed against the errors of the past, we need to ask him to forgive or remit. But the expression, 'forgive a debt,' is incorrect, and in the second clause of this petition the words 'our debtors,' if understood in the common sense, convey altogether too narrow an idea. The original was used in a wider signification, as is apparent from Luke xiii. 4, where

the word rendered 'sinners' is the same which in our common bibles is here translated 'debtors.'—We cannot but observe the connexion of the two clauses. We pray for the pardon of our sins, because we forgive others, who may have offended or injured us; not as if we had thus created a claim on the Divine Being, nor as if forgiveness was the only act which we were required to perform; but as by such an act we evince a disposition particularly acceptable to God, while the indulgence of a vindictive temper would disqualify us alike for receiving and for asking his forgiveness. The great purpose of connecting the two parts of this petition in this way was, I conceive, the same that induced our Lord to open the prayer with the word 'Our;' to teach that benevolence and piety should be always found together.—In the book of Ecclesiasticus xxviii. 2, we have a very similar sentiment, 'Forgive thy neighbor the hurt that he hath done unto thee, so shall thy sins also be forgiven when thou prayest.'

V. 13. '*Bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.*' The two parts of the verse should be taken together, so as to constitute in fact but one petition; Do not in thy providence subject us to trials, through which we may not with thy gracious help pass unharmed. The language of the Apostle in 1 Cor. x. 13, is almost a paraphrase of this verse.—God is said in James i. 13, to tempt no man; that is, he solicits, or 'entices' (James i. 14) no one to commit sin; but he surrounds us all with circumstances which may become the occasions of wickedness or of improvement as we choose, being himself always ready to assist us if we be faithful to ourselves.

'*The evil one.*' See note to Matt. v. 37. Whether the devil be considered the author or the representative of all evil, the source or the personification of whatever may endanger our souls, the translation may be that which I have given.

The doxology which follows in our bibles, with the word 'amen,' appears to have been an addition of some transcriber, who probably thought he might introduce it into the text, as it was commonly used in closing the prayer. The authority of the earliest manuscripts and Christian Fathers is against its genuineness. It should therefore be omitted in a correct edition of the New Testament.

Vs. 14, 15. See note on verse 12. Observe how often our Lord insists on our forgiving one another; Matt. xviii. 35, Mark xi. 25, 26.

V. 16. The practice of *fasting* among the Jews was of a later date than the Law of Moses. Before the time of Jesus fast-days were multiplied, and those persons who affected singular excellence kept them often and with great appearance of humiliation. The Pharisee in Luke xviii. 12 says, 'I fast twice in a week.' See also Matt. ix. 14.

'*They disfigure their faces.*' I should have been glad to find a word that would more exactly represent the original, the primitive meaning of which is to put out of sight, to cause to disappear. Wakefield in his 'New Translation of Matthew' renders it 'disguise,' and paraphrases the expression thus, 'They destroy the natural appearance of their faces, not only by an affectation of sorrow and dejection, but by the neglect of dress and cleanliness.' It was only a temporary concealment of their good looks. The Orientals express grief or humiliation by what we should esteem extravagant signs. See 2 Sam. i. 2, Ezek. xxvii. 30.

V. 17. '*Anoint thy head and wash thy face;*' i. e. observe your usual habits. In the East they both wash frequently and make free use of fragrant ointments. Daniel in describing his 'mourning' says, 'neither did I anoint myself at all for three weeks,' from which it appears that it was with him a common practice. Dan. x. 3. See also 2 Sam. xii. 20, xiv. 2, Mark xiv. 3, Luke vii. 46.

PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. Again we notice the great peculiarity of the Christian religion,—that it requires a just state of the heart, 'the inner man.' In its view the motive determines the character of the action. Nothing then can be plainer than that we should be strict in self-examination, that we may discover, analyze, purify, and raise our motives.

2. A desire of human *praise* is not a right motive. Yet this proposition does not justify indifference to the opinion of others. The Apostle commends to the regard of his friends 'whatsoever things are of good report.' The love of applause, a passion for notoriety, the craving of an ambitious spirit, are wrong, for they are essentially corrupt. A desire of human approbation or esteem, which within certain bounds is both innocent and useful, becomes a vicious motive, as soon as it stands before or in the way of that regard for the divine favor which should be the impelling and ruling sentiment of our hearts.

3. What an intimacy of feeling and of life are we taught to maintain with God. And with what tenderness of condescension does he invite us to live with him. He is our Father; he is with us in secret; he beholds our private acts of piety and beneficence; he will recompense us with the compensations of a blissful eternity for the imperfect goodness which the sincere may be able to render him in this short life. We ought not to wish any other inducement to regard him always as our Father, Witness and Friend. What other inducement would be effectual, if these are insufficient?

4. Prayer, the highest privilege and purest joy of the soul, at once the expression and satisfaction of its wants, the utterance and relief of its troubles, in what a delightful character does Jesus present prayer to the view of his disciples ;—as the communion of the child with its Parent. When the Christian prays, it is neither a servile homage nor a reluctant tribute which he renders, but an affectionate converse which he maintains with his Infinite Benefactor. He speaks of his necessities and dangers and offences, not because God is ignorant of them, nor because God must be *persuaded* into granting the desired favor, but because this freedom of communication creates by its own action the happiest feelings and the best influences ; and therefore our Father who is in heaven from the love which he bears us, for our sakes and not for his own, has permitted and prescribed the offices of filial devotion.

5. Of all sins hypocrisy is the most base and dangerous ; for it has neither ignorance nor temptation to excuse it, and it makes the most sacred things the instruments of its vile purpose. Our Lord directed against this sin his most frequent and severe censures. The hypocrite he visited with a poignancy of reproof which he bestowed on no one else.

6. Consider and remember the condition of the divine forgiveness,—that we forgive one another. If with petition for pardon on our lips we cherish a vindictive or even an unkind purpose in our hearts, we utter the language of our own condemnation. ‘Forgive as we forgive.’ Let the Christian, before he offers this prayer to the omniscient God, ponder both its meaning and its application to himself.

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

The city of Jerusalem stands as a crown on a long range of hills; and it has several eminences within its limits. On the eastern side rose the magnificent temple on Mount Moriah. At the west was the lower city on the hill Acra. The new city at the northwest was on Bezetha. The upper city southwest from the temple covered the top of Mount Zion. In the immediate vicinity were vallies; on the east that of Jehosaphat; on the south that of Hinnom, and in the west that of Gehon. The Mount of Olives was at the east of the city, and overlooked a great part of it. The scenery for several miles is bold and picturesque; and the hills would have engaged attention though no angel had touched their tops.

The pilgrim band from the most distant border of Palestine feel no moderate joy at their arrival near the holy Mount. Care and anxiety are left at home; joy and gladness become their companions. Youthful vigor seems doubly vigorous, and Jehovah strengthens the feeble knees. As they pass the boundary line of Judah, how strong the emotion which thrills through the heart! They forget every step of the lengthened way and all the weariness of exhausted nature, in the exhilarating thought that every step brings them so much nearer to the temple of the Lord. And when at length the pious pilgrim fastens his longing eye on its clustering towers, how spontaneously from his lips breaks forth the ejaculation, 'Jerusalem! thou city built on high! we wish thee peace.'

The caravans arrived on the day previous to the feast, in time to build the tents, or booths, in which they were commanded to live during the seven days of the feast, (Neh. viii. 13.); in order more deeply to impress on every mind the fact that their fathers lived in tents or tabernacles in the wilderness. The outside of these tents was made principally by weaving together the branches of the olive, pine, myrtle, palm and willow trees. The effect must have been highly agreeable, to see a valley, which was yesterday unoccupied and silent, today suddenly filled with an assembled nation. There seems a magic in the building of such a city. Where the seared leaf and dry fields of autumn were all that could be seen at morning, there has sprung up before night a thick grove in all the freshness of vernal beauty. Yesterday no sound of human voices broke the stillness of the valley; to day ten thousand happy hearts are giving rapid utterance to their joy. The whole surrounding country seemed but one grand encampment; and every tent was well supplied with bread, honey, dates, wine, mead, and whatever else could multiply the comforts of the *feast of gathering*. This feast was instituted in commemoration of the journey of the Israelites through the Arabian wilderness, and as an expression of gratitude for the fruitage and vintage.

The time for entering the tent was at the beginning of the day, which with the Jews was at sunset, and they began their day at that hour to shew that chaotic darkness preceded the creation of light.

As soon as the evening star appeared above the western sea, every family went forth to occupy its tent; the patriarch, or head of the family, exclaiming as he left

his house, 'Blessed be thou, O Lord our God, thou King of the earth! who hast sanctified us by thy precepts, and commanded us to dwell in tabernacles.' The night having passed, no sooner had the first rays of morning flushed the tops of the Arabian hills, than all were in motion for the temple, where the attending priests had for hours been preparing for the solemnities. The usual morning service introduced the peculiar solemnities of the occasion. It was briefly as follows.

The priests having washed in the purest water, as a symbol of the unstained character required in their sacred office, they wait for the 'president of the lots;*' whose knocking for admission may be earlier or later than cock crowing. On his arrival they go in divided companies round the temple, and meet at the gate Nicanor, and cry 'All's well.' Having ordered the cakes for the high priest's offering, they next cast lots to designate the priests who are to serve at the altar. According to their stipulated routine they remove the ashes and renew the fire. A second balloting designates thirteen priests, whose duties were fixed with great precision; the killing of the sacrifice and the bringing of its divided parts to the altar devolved on them. When the ninetythree gold and silver vessels used in the daily service are in readiness, the President appoints one person to ascend a high pinnacle of the temple to watch for the approach of day. As soon as it is seen, he hails it, and cries, 'It is day, and the heaven is bright all up to Hebron.' Then they are commanded to prepare the lamb for the sacrifice. In the mean time the aged

* Brown's Antiquities, vol. 1. p. 446, and Lightfoot on 'Temple Service.'

priest who holds the keys opens the seven gates leading into the court of Israel, and the two doors between the porch and the holy place. No sooner has the seventh gate rolled back on its hinges, than the silver trumpets sound; and the whole congregation of Israel enter the courts. Immediately the Levites with their prepared music hasten to their desks, which were on the fifteen steps that led from the 'court of the women' to the gate Nicanor. The other stationary attendants are at their places in waiting. At this moment the sacrifice is killed. Every thing being now prepared in the holy place and on the altar of incense, the selected priests, whose stand was on the sloping sides of the altar, bring the sacrifice for the burnt offering; and then unite in a prayer to Jehovah, in which were the most touching expressions of veneration, gratitude and trust. After this they rehearse the decalogue, and repeat their phylacteries. When the priests who are to offer the sacrifice of incense are ready, the signal '*to offer*' is given with great solemnity. The trumpets sound, the alarm echoes from every wall, and the Levites together strike their instruments. At this moment the incense is kindled, which filled the 'holy place' with its odoriferous perfume, while the whole congregation joined in devout homage. The prayers now offered breathed the most enlarged charity for the heathen, the most devoted attachment to Judaism, and the strongest confidence in Jehovah's promises.* When the sacrifice has been laid on the altar of burnt-offering, then the priest who had offered the incense comes from the holy place, and stands upon the steps

* Rosenmuller, Sykes, and Lightfoot.

which lead to the porch; and there, with head reclined in token of humility and with hands raised in token of prayer, he audibly pronounces this sacred and paternal benediction on the people below; 'The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make his face to shine upon thee and be gracious to thee; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.'

After this introductory service, which varied at different periods in the Jewish history, began that which was peculiar to the Feast of Tabernacles. We may say in passing, that no modern can adequately conceive the heartfelt enthusiasm which pervaded the pious mind of the genuine Arimean Jew at these annual solemnities of the temple. The influence of the place was breathed in, like the atmosphere, at every breath. Every thing impressive was brought to excite his imagination and prostrate his passions. When he entered the temple no staff must be in his hand and no shoes upon his feet, and he must shake off worldly thoughts as the dust from his sandals. Within that sacred enclosure no needless money must be found in his girdle, and no scrip within his vesture. He must not profane the place by spitting, nor offend others by irreverent gestures; he must stand erect during the sacrifice with his eyes bent downward; and when he prays, his head must be covered and his hands laid upon his heart. Here were powerful moral influences wonderfully adapted to Oriental taste. When we consider the common feeling connected with the temple worship, the long pilgrimage in order to join it, and the social emotion created by sympathy with numbers, we need not wonder that it brought out

and brightened the principles of piety. The early hour of the morning service, the nature of the sacrifice, the silence of the people, the benediction from the steps, and the selected choir celebrating with rapturous thanksgiving the praises of Jehovah, were all calculated to produce a solemn awe in the soul and lift it above the fascinations of idolatry.

The services peculiar to the feast had been enjoined in the Law.* On the first day they were to offer thirteen bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs, and a kid of the goats, with their meat and drink offerings. The same sacrifice to be repeated in each succeeding day, except in the case of the bullocks where the required number daily decreased by one. It is difficult to distinguish minutely between the ceremonies which Moses meant should be perpetual at this feast and those which prevailed as inferences from his directions. The custom became universal on the first day of the feast to gather and carry in the hand one branch of palm, three of myrtle and two of willow;† one of the willows to be laid on the altar. In the other hand were carried the pomecitrons; (for what our translators render '*the boughs of good trees*,' Lev. xxxiii. 40. means literally in the Hebrew, *the fruit of the beautiful tree*;) and the rich appearance, fragrant smell, refreshing taste and beautiful yellow of the citron helped no doubt to recommend this fruit.

With these preliminary appendages in their hands, and a burning zeal in their hearts, they were ready to go up to the temple. The trumpets from Mount Moriah

* Lev. xxiii. Numb. xxix.

† Calmet.

announce the time of assembling, and the thousand horns from the tents and streets reply to the summons. The multitude filled the 'court of Israel' and the 'court of the women.' When in the morning service the parts of the sacrifice were laid on the altar of burnt offering, then followed the ceremony of pouring out the *water of libation*, which the priests had brought in the golden ewer from the pure fountain of Siloah—a happy symbol of the blessings of rain. The Levites on this occasion sung the Psalms for the Feast, (cxiii—cxviii;) and when they came to these words, 'O, give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, and his mercy endureth forever,' the crowd evinced their irrepressible ardor by significant tokens in shaking and waving the branches in their hands. During the Hosanna in the cxviiith Psalm, the priests and people in solemn procession walked round the altar in imitation of the journey in the wilderness. After they had attended to the sacrifice prescribed for the prince, (Ezek. xlv. 25,) they deposited their willow branches beside the altar, and repeated among other texts the following, 'O Lord! we beseech thee, send now prosperity.' With these they closed the morning service.*

After dinner they were engaged in attending on the doctors of the Law, to learn its import and gather encouragement from its promises.

In the evening worship *the rejoicing for the pouring* was particularly observed. The women assembled in the balconies of their court, and the men in the area below. The golden lamps were burning, and the priests

* Lightfoot, Le Clerc, Rosenmuller, Brown.

had made all things ready. At the signal given the pipe of the temple began to play. The Levites seated themselves with their instruments on the steps; while all who could join the vocal chant gathered around. The dome of heaven seemed to give back the strains in token of approbation. Here was sung the *song of steps*, (Psalm cxx—cxxxv.) Every heart leaped for joy at the national air. The king laid down his sceptre to assume the harp. The chiefs of the tribes, the members of the Sanhedrim, and the men renowned for piety and worth accompanied the music in expressive dances, waving their torch lights and uttering ejaculations. These continued for several hours; when at length two priests appear at the gate Nicanor with trumpets in their hands, and sound the signal of departure to the rejoicing crowd. Descending to the tenth step they sound a second time; then in the 'court of the women' a third, and then advancing to the 'Beautiful' gate they sound as they walk. The people retire, and this closes the first day; and we may say with Maimonides, 'It was a rejoicing for the keeping of the law, to which no joy on earth was comparable.'

Such were the ceremonies observed on the first day of this feast, which continued through a week. The celebration on the last day was, if possible, yet more significant of religious gratitude and joy, but was similar in its circumstances. On the intermediate days the solemnities were less remarkable. C. BROOKS.

USES OF THE JEWISH FEASTS.

The solemnities which belonged to the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles have been described in the last article. Let us suppose that at their termination, the people having retired to their several tents in the valley, an aged pilgrim, the head of a family, whose infirmities assure him that he is now at Jerusalem for the last time, lingers around the temple after the crowd have departed, and finds a seat where he can view the mingled tribes below. The joy, gratitude and thanksgiving of Israel he had that day seen offered to the Lord; and now he has witnessed the return of each united family to its tent in peace. He feels a direct and thrilling sympathy with the hour. The avenues through which the world enters the heart are now closed. The glare of the day is gone; the trumpets have sounded for the last time; the priest has pronounced his parting benediction; the temple gates have been folded together; and all is silence. The air about him is pure and balmy, the stars are looking down with their autumnal brilliancy, the thousand beautiful tents lie peacefully in the distance, and the unnumbered lamps within them shine so clearly as to make the wide vale seem like a firmament below. From a group under some palm trees the mingled notes of harps, cymbals, lutes and human voices begin to come through the soft air with all the mellowness which night and distance give to music. In this hour of holy thought, of deep and tender musing, the aged pilgrim feels 'the divinity that stirs within us.' All the lofty principles of the soul

come forth in their strength ; and in place of the hurrying tumult of the world, the refreshment of moral power descends upon him with all the stillness of the dew. However devious have been his wanderings, or fierce the struggles of his life, how much soever he could remember to rejoice in or deplore, *now* all are absorbed in one pervading sentiment of submission. Every thing draws him to God. He looks at the temple, and it calls up the most hallowed associations ; because there is the altar of sacrifice, and there in the holy place are the golden candlesticks, the golden altar of incense, and the golden table of shew bread ; and in the ' holy of holies ' are the ark of the covenant, the tables of the law, the mercy seat, the cherubim and the schekinah.

These carry his thoughts to the wonderful events of former times. The long line of patriarchal ancestry pass in review before him, and his bright historic recollections send a generous glow through his heart. In imagination he goes forth with Abraham when about to sacrifice his only son and bury his only hope. The story of Joseph and his brethren, where the compassion of God is put in contrast with the cruelty of man ; the departure of Jacob for Egypt ; the wearisome stay of his ancestors in the land of bondage ; their final deliverance ; their receiving the law at Mount Sinai ; the miracles of mercy in the pillar which guided, and the rock which followed them through the wilderness ; their valorous leader, who seemed born to be God's mouth in giving laws and God's arm in executing them ; their entrance into Palestine as the home of their fathers ; the heroic age of the Judges ; the faithful prophecies of coming sorrows and future triumphs ; the strong desire

for a king; the character of Saul contrasted with the magnanimous love of Jonathan; the youthful David, whose after life proved him able to overcome every giant danger; and Solomon, whose checkered career has made him the wonder of the world; all these, with their consequences, make the heart of the aged pilgrim expand with gratitude and adore with humility.

I have mentioned this case of one of the fathers in Israel on purpose to say that it was not an uncommon one. These meditations were very common at these feasts; and their direct agency in connecting each generation with those who had preceded, and then uniting all to Jehovah as the head of the nation, gave an interest, vitality and power to their *moral* associations, which was almost like investing them with eternal sanctions. Such are the moments which are decisive in the formation of character, and they send down a healthy influence through the whole remaining life.

I trust the foregoing remarks have shewn that the Jewish feasts were the best religious schools for such a people, wherein they might be taught the rudiments intended by Jehovah as introductory to higher degrees in reserve.

But they had other uses. They were conducive to *health*. The journies promoted muscular strength and vivacity of feeling. Whatever gives new zest to the mind imparts refreshing action to the body. For some diseases cheerfulness is a sovereign remedy. As the first and last days of the feast were sacred, the intervening days might be used in work, trade and visiting. Their solemnization consisted in occasional offering-feasts and votive hymns, in moderate dancing and chas-

tened hilarity ; greatly resembling in these respects the union of religion and amusement on our New England Thanksgiving day.

The *social* advantages were many. The assembling brought out the joy of warm hearts and the greetings of welcome hospitality. The repeated exercise of kind emotions, if only in the courtesies of life, begets at length the principle of kindness. Jerusalem at these times, being crowded with the inhabitants of the land, was but as one hospitable house ; for every citizen considered his home on these sacred occasions as belonging to the pilgrim and the stranger. The young persons of the distant tribes had an opportunity of seeing each other, and many happy intermarriages were the result.

The *political* advantages of these annual feasts, among separate federal republics, were great and multifiform. Like the pilgrimages to Mecca, which have opened there one of the greatest markets in the world, the Jewish festivals may be denominated *Fairs*, in which the most vigorous trade was carried on between the various members of the different tribes. The farmers talked over their experiments in agriculture, and sold the new seeds which they had proved to be excellent. It was a time of general barter ; while every thing portable which could be sold was turned to ready money. The whole political economy and statistics of the country passed in review before these vast assemblies. The Jewish constitution was political as well as religious. For example, the wine and oil used in the offerings led to the cultivation of the olive and the grape. These were sources of wealth to Palestine, and I mention them only as a specimen of the manner in which their

religious institutions had a reflected influence on their internal commerce. Perhaps the most important political advantage in these festal seasons was the community of feeling they cherished. It was not easy for dangerous jealousies or commanding monopolies to continue long, when every custom and association led to union of interest and sympathy of feeling. When Jeroboam prohibited the annual pilgrimages of the ten tribes to Jerusalem, he showed profound policy; because no arrangement could so rivet the sentiments of friendship and deaden those of alienation as the high festivals.

At these seasons the bondman felt himself free; tired hands threw down their tools, and broken hearted poverty had its burden lightened and its spirit refreshed by the good cheer of the festive celebration. Thus these feasts were indeed what Moses has represented them—seasons of rejoicing before Jehovah in the intervals of labor.

C. BROOKS.

THE EVANGELISTS HAVE WRITTEN A TRUE HISTORY.

[From Harwood's Introduction.]

This is the title of one of the sections of the first chapter of Harwood's 'Introduction to the Study and Knowledge of the New Testament,' a work published in London between sixty and seventy years ago. Dr Harwood was a Dissenting clergyman, the author of a 'Liberal Translation of the New Testament,' in

which the characteristics of the sacred writers are lost in an 'unhappy attempt to translate them with the same freedom, spirit and elegance with which other translators from the Greek classics have lately been executed.' He was distinguished for his acquaintance with both sacred and profane literature; and his 'Introduction,' though written before criticism and interpretation were formed into branches of science, contains much that is valuable.

'We have the same reason to believe that the Evangelists have given us a true history of the life and transactions of Jesus, as we have to believe that Xenophon and Plato have given us a faithful and just narrative of the character and doctrines of Socrates. The sacred writers were in every respect, qualified for giving a real circumstantial detail of the life and religion of the person, whose memoirs they have transmitted down to us. They were the select companions and familiar friends of the hero of their story. They had free and liberal access to him at all times. They attended his public discourses, and in his moments of retirement he unbosomed his whole soul to them without disguise. They were daily witnesses of his sincerity and goodness of heart. They were spectators of the amazing operations he performed, and of the silent unostentatious manner in which he performed them. In private he explained to them the doctrines of his religion in the most familiar endearing converse, and gradually initiated them into the principles of his gospel, as their Jewish prejudices admitted. Some of these writers were his inseparable attendants from the commence-

ment of his public ministry to his death, and could give the world as true and faithful a narrative of his character and instructions, as Xenophon was enabled to publish of the life and philosophy of Socrates. If Plato has been deemed in every respect qualified to compose an historical account of the behavior of his master in his imprisonment, and of the philosophic discourses he addressed to his friends before he drank the poisonous bowl, as he constantly attended him in those unhappy scenes and was present at those mournful interviews ; in like manner was the Apostle John equally fitted for compiling a just and genuine narration of the last consolatory discourses our Lord delivered to his dejected followers, a little before his last sufferings, and of the unhappy exit he made, with its attendant circumstances, of which he was a personal spectator. The foundation of these things cannot be invalidated without invalidating the faith of history.

No writers have enjoyed more propitious, few have ever enjoyed such favorable, opportunities for publishing just accounts of persons and things as the Evangelists. Most of the Greek and Roman historians lived long after the persons they immortalize, and the events they record. The sacred writers commemorate actions they saw, discourses they heard, persecutions they supported, describe characters with which they were familiarly conversant, and transactions and scenes in which they themselves were intimately interested. The pages of their history are impressed with every feature of credibility. An artless simplicity characterizes all their writings. Nothing can be farther from vain ostentation and popular applause. No studied arts to dress up ' a cunning-

ly devised fable.' No vain declamation after any miracle of our Saviour they relate. They record these astonishing operations with the same dispassionate coolness as if they had been common transactions, without that ostentatious rodomontade which impostors and enthusiasts universally employ. They give us a plain unadorned narration of these amazing feats of supernatural power, saying nothing previously to raise our expectation, or after their performance breaking forth into any exclamation, but leaving the reader to draw the conclusion.

The writers of these books are distinguished above all the authors who ever wrote accounts of persons and things, for their sincerity and integrity. Enthusiasts and impostors never proclaim to the world the weakness of their understanding, and the defects of their character. The Evangelists honestly acquaint the reader with the lowness of their station, the indigence of their circumstances, the inveteracy of their national prejudices, their dulness of apprehension, their weakness of faith, their ambitious views, and the warm contentions they agitated among themselves. They even tell us how they basely deserted their Master by a shameful precipitate flight, when he was seized by his enemies; and that after his crucifixion they had all again returned to their former secular employments, forever resigning all the hopes they had once fondly cherished, and abandoning the cause in which they had so long been engaged, notwithstanding all the proofs that had been exhibited, and the conviction they had before entertained that Jesus was the Messiah and that his religion was from God. A faithful picture this, held up

to the reader for him to contemplate the true features of the writer's mind.

Such men as these were as far from being deceived themselves, as they were incapable of imposing a falsehood upon others. The sacred regard they had for truth appears in every thing they relate. They mention, with many affecting circumstances, the obstinate unreasonable incredulity of one of their associates—not convinced but by ocular and sensible demonstration. They might have concealed from the world their own faults and follies; or if they had chosen to mention them, might have alleged plausible reasons to soften and extenuate them. But they related without disguise events and facts just as they happened, and left them to speak their own language. So that to reject a history thus circumstanced, and impeach the veracity of writers furnished with these qualifications for giving the justest accounts of personal characters and transactions, which they enjoyed the best opportunities for accurately observing and knowing, is an affront offered to the reason and understanding of mankind, a solcism against the laws of truth and history. It would, with equal reason, lead men to disbelieve every thing related in Herodotus, Thucydides, Diodorus Siculus, Livy, and Tacitus, to confound all history with fable and fiction, truth with falsehood, and veracity with imposture, and not to credit any thing how well soever attested,—that there were such kings as the Stuarts, or such places as Paris and Rome, because we are not indulged with ocular conviction of them. The truth of the gospel history rests upon the same basis with the truth of other ancient books, and its pretensions are to be impartially

examined by the same rules, by which we judge of the credibility of all other historical monuments. And if we compare the merit of the sacred writers as historians with that of other writers, we shall be convinced that they are inferior to none who ever wrote, either with regard to knowledge of persons, acquaintance with facts, candor of mind, or reverence for truth.'

SIMPLICITY OF DESIGN IN THE EVANGELISTS.

[From Campbell's Dissertations.]

In connexion with the preceding remarks may be read an extract from one of the 'Preliminary Dissertations' to Campbell's Translation of the Four Gospels, a work well known in this country, having been reprinted I believe two or three times. The writer is describing 'the style of the sacred history,' and mentions as 'its first quality, simplicity.' After speaking of 'simplicity of structure,' and 'simplicity of sentiment,' he notices what he terms 'simplicity of design;' in which he says, 'our Lord's biographers particularly excel.' The meaning and propriety of this language will be learned from the illustrations which he adduces.

'These historians do in their own character neither explain nor command, promise nor threaten, commend nor blame, but preserve one even tenor in exhibiting the facts entirely unembellished, reporting in singleness of heart both what was said and what was done

by their Master, likewise what was said and what was done to him by either friends or enemies. Not a syllable of encomium on the former, or of invective against the latter. As to their Lord himself, they appear to regard his character as infinitely superior to any praise which they could bestow: and as to his persecutors, they mingle no gall in what they write concerning them; they do not desire to aggravate their guilt in the judgment of any man, either by giving expressly, or by so much as insinuating through the severity of their language, their opinion concerning it.

Nay, which is more remarkable, the names of the high priest and his coadjutor, of the Roman procurator, of the tetrarch of Galilee, and of the treacherous disciple, are all that are mentioned of the many who had a hand in his prosecution and death. In regard to the four first, it is manifest that the suppression of the names, had the facts been related, would have made no difference to contemporaries; for in offices of so great eminence possessed by single persons, as all those offices were, the official is equivalent to the proper name, which it never fails to suggest; but such a suppression would have made to posterity a material defect in the history, and greatly impaired its evidence. In regard to the fifth, it is sufficient to observe, that without naming the traitor justice could not have been done to the eleven. Whereas, of those Scribes and Pharisees who bargained with Judas, of the men who apprehended Jesus, of the officer who struck him on the face at his trial, of the false witnesses who deposed against him, of those who afterwards spat upon him, buffeted and mocked him, of those who were loudest in crying 'Away with him;

Crucify him ; Not this man, but Barabbas,' of those who supplied the multitude with the implements of their mockery—the crown of thorns, the reed and the scarlet robe, of those who upbraided him on the cross with his inability to save himself, or of the soldier who pierced his side with a spear, no name is given by any of the historians.

It may be said, 'the names have not been known to them.' This may have been true of some of their names, but cannot be supposed to have been true of them all, and that with regard not to one, two or three, but to all the four Evangelists. The witnesses must have been persons of the country, and at least occasional hearers of our Lord. It was no doubt chiefly the people of Jerusalem who tumultuously demanded his execution, who derided him with the title of Messiah, and who insulted him even on the cross. Curiosity on such occasions leads men to inquire about persons who act a principal part in a scene so tragical ; and that the disciples were not beyond the influence of this motive, is evident from the whole of the story. The names of the Roman soldiers concerned in this transaction might have been unknown to them, and probably little minded by them ; but the actions of their countrymen must have excited another kind of emotion, as it more nearly affected all his followers.

Now this reserve in regard to the names of those who were the chief instruments of his sufferings is the more observable, as the names of others to whom no special part is attributed are mentioned without hesitation. Thus Malchus, whose ear Peter cut off and who was immediately after miraculously cured by Jesus, is

named by John ; but nothing further is told of him, than that he was present when our Lord was seized and that he was a servant of the high-priest. Simon the Cyrenian, who carried the cross, is named by no fewer than three of the Evangelists ; but we are also informed, that in this service he did not act voluntarily but by compulsion. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus are the only members of the Sanhedrim, except the high-priest, who are mentioned by name ; but they were the only persons of that body who did not concur in condemning the Son of God, and who, though once fearful and secret disciples, assumed the resolution to display their affection at a time when no one else ventured openly to acknowledge him. Our Lord's biographers, whilst they are thus far ready to do justice to merit, avoid naming any man without necessity, of whom they have nothing to say that is not to his dishonor. To the virtuous and good they conciliate our esteem and love, an effectual method of raising our admiration of virtue and goodness and exciting in us a noble emulation ; but our contempt and hatred they direct against the crimes, not against the persons of men, against vice, not against the vicious ; aware that this last direction is often of the most dangerous tendency to Christian charity, and consequently to genuine virtue. They showed no disposition to hold up any man to the Christians of their own time as an object of either their fear or their abhorrence, or to transmit his name with infamy to posterity.

Though this holds principally in what concerns the last great catastrophe, it appears in some degree in every part of the history. Except in the case of Herodias,

which from the rank of the personages concerned must have been a matter of notoriety and public scandal, and therefore required a more public reprehension, the names are never mentioned when what is related reflects disgrace on the persons. Of the Scribes and Pharisees who watched our Lord, and on different occasions dissembling esteem assailed him with captious and ensnaring questions, of those who openly ascribed his miracles to Beelzebub, called him a madman, a demoniac, and what they accounted worse than either, a Samaritan, who accused him of associating with the profligate, of sabbath-breaking, of intemperance, and blasphemy, of those Sadducees who by their sophistry vainly attempted to refute the doctrine of the resurrection, of those enraged Nazarenes his fellow-citizens who would have carried him by force to a precipice that they might throw him down headlong, no names are ever mentioned; nor is the young but opulent magistrate named, who came to consult him as to what he must do to obtain eternal life; for though there were some favorable symptoms in his case, yet, as by going away sorrowful he betrayed a heart wedded to the world, the application did not terminate to his honor. But of Simon the Pharisee, who invited our Lord to his house and who though doubtful seemed inclinable to learn, of Jairus, and Bartimeus, and Zaccheus, and Lazarus, and his sisters Mary and Martha, and some others, of whose faith, repentance, gratitude, love, and piety the most honorable testimony is given, a very different account is made.

Some may object, that this conduct in the first disciples is imputable to a weak and timid policy. They

were afraid to raise against themselves powerful enemies, whose vengeance might prove fatal to their persons and ruinous to their cause. It happens luckily for silencing this pretext, that in other things they gave the most unequivocal proofs of their fortitude; besides that the exceptions above mentioned include almost all the persons possessed of such authority civil or sacred united with such a disposition, as could render their resentment an object of terror to those who were obnoxious to it. That the difference thus marked between the evil and the good is, on the contrary, in the true spirit of their Master might be inferred, as from several other passages, so in particular from that similitude wherein the rewards and punishments of another state are so well exemplified. A name is given to the poor man who was conveyed by angels to Abraham's bosom; the other, who was consigned to torments, is distinguished solely by the epithet, rich. A particularity from which we may learn an instructive lesson of modesty and caution in regard to names, when what truth compels us to say is to the disadvantage of the persons, and that it suffices that we consider particular punishments as suited to particular actions, without referring them to known individuals or leading the thoughts of others to refer them.

But as to the penmen themselves and their fellow-disciples, in recording their own faults no secret is made of the names. Of this the intemperate zeal of the sons of Zebedee on one occasion, and their ambition and secular views on another, the incredulity of Thomas, the presumption of Peter, and his lamentable defection in the denial of his Master, not to mention the

prejudices and dulness of them all, are eminent examples. These particulars are all related by the sacred historians with the same undisguised plainness, which they use in relating the crimes of adversaries; and with as little endeavor to extenuate the former as to aggravate the latter. Nor have they, on the other hand, the remotest appearance of making a merit of their confession. In one uniform strain they record the most signal miracles and the most ordinary events. In regard to the one, like persons familiarized to such exertions of power, they no more express themselves either with hesitancy or with strong asseverations, than they do in regard to the other. Equally certain of the facts advanced, they recite both in the same unvaried tone, as faithful witnesses whose business it was to testify and not to argue.'

THE PREACHING RECORDED IN THE BOOK OF
THE ACTS.

In the Acts of the Apostles we have an inestimable treasure in the sermons which they delivered. For this book is a history of their preaching, and though, as is probable, those discourses which have been transmitted to us bear but a small proportion to the whole number which in the course of their laborious ministry they preached, yet when we consider the great solemnity and importance of the occasions on which they were delivered;—that some were with the express intention of giving instruction respecting the nature, condi-

tions and duties of Christianity, and of vindicating its author and his system from unmerited reproach, on the one hand from Jewish bigots, as the Scribes and Pharisees, and on the other from the whole host of Deists and Atheists among the Heathens; that some were uttered not only before a mixed multitude but before solemn assemblies or dignified personages, such as the discourse of Peter and John before the rulers of the people and elders of Israel, that of Stephen before the High Priest and the Jewish Council, that of Paul before the Areopagus, or the high court of Athens, and his admirable defence before Festus the Roman Governor and King Agrippa; that others were addressed to individuals before their baptism, at their particular desire, and with an express view of informing them on the Christian faith, as for example, the conversation of Philip with the Ethiopian eunuch, or chamberlain of Queen Candace, that of Peter before he baptized Cornelius, and that of Paul to the converted jailor;—when, I say, we consider the importance, solemnity and variety of the occasions on which these discourses or conversations were held, we are authorized to suppose that, brief as they are, they contain all that it is necessary to know or to believe in order to become a Christian. On such occasions as we have mentioned, neither Paul nor the rest of the Apostles could consistently with fidelity have kept back any important doctrine of the gospel. On the contrary, taking into view their character and their design, we may believe that they would have taught on such occasions with studied plainness and explicitness, so that there should be no doubt upon the subject. I propose to exhibit their instruc-

tions substantially in their own words, bringing together whatever is formally or explicitly taught in the Book of the Acts on the subjects of Christian faith.

1. The first sermon delivered by the Apostles was by St Peter, after they had received the holy spirit on the day of Pentecost. On this remarkable occasion Peter rose up in the midst of the great multitude that were assembled,* and said, 'Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know; him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.' And after referring at large to the prophecy of David concerning his resurrection, he adds, 'This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are witnesses; and being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the holy ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.' 'Therefore,' he concludes, 'let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made this same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.' Then in answer to their anxious inquiry, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' he prescribes the conditions of becoming disciples; 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.' And 'they that gladly received his word were baptized.'

2. The second discourse is that of Peter before the people in Solomon's porch after he and John had 'in

* Acts ii. 22—41.

the name of Christ' healed the lame man at the gate of the temple.* It is unnecessary to give it at full length. It will be found upon examination to declare the following truths; viz. That God had glorified his Son Jesus; had raised him from the dead; that faith in his name had made a lame man whole; that God would send him again, but the heavens would receive him until the times of restitution of all things; that these things had been predicted by the Prophets; and lastly, that the express purpose for which God had sent his Son was, to bless men in turning them from their iniquities.

3. The third sermon we have is also by St Peter, who was summoned with John before the High Priest, rulers, elders, and scribes at Jerusalem to answer 'by what power or name' they had healed the lame.† 'Then Peter filled with the holy ghost said, Ye rulers of the people; * * be it known unto you all, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is no other name given among men, whereby we must be saved.'

And it is added at the end of the chapter in a general account of the first Christians, that 'with great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.‡

4. The next address is still by St Peter, after he and the other Apostles had been miraculously liberated from

* Acts iii. 12—26.

† Acts iv. 8—12.

‡ Acts iv. 33.

prison, where they had been confined for preaching in the name of Jesus.* It is addressed to the High Priest and to them that were with him; and the doctrines delivered are, that 'God had exalted Jesus to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins; of which they, the Apostles, were witnesses, as also the holy ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.'

5. The next in course is the long address of the first martyr Stephen before the High Priest and Jewish council.† It is a brief survey of the Jewish history; in which there is nothing exclusively of Christian doctrine. In the course of it however he refers to that prediction of Moses concerning Christ;—'A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up like unto me; him shall ye hear;' and at the conclusion of it, 'being full of the holy ghost, and looking up steadfastly into heaven, he saw the glory of God, and said, Behold I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God;' and when they were stoning him, and he was near expiring, he cried saying, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.'

6. The sixth address is from the conversation of Philip,‡ who had been chosen and approved as deacon, with the Ethiopian eunuch, or chamberlain, who had been reading the fifty third chapter of Isaiah, and asked Philip, whom he met in his way, of whom the Prophet spake, whether 'of himself, or of some other man;' and Philip 'began at the same scripture and preached unto him Jesus.' And when the eunuch asked, 'what

* Acts v. 29—32.

† Acts vii. 2—60.

‡ Acts viii. 26—39.

doth hinder me to be baptized?' Philip answered, 'If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he said, I believe, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he baptized him.' Here we learn, that the condition of baptism as required by the first preachers of Christianity was,—believing, that Jesus Christ was the Son of God.

That I may omit nothing, that may seem important, I add, that Philip is said previously to have gone down to Samaria, and to have 'preached Christ,'* and again 'when they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized.'†

The first part of the ninth chapter contains the account of the miraculous conversion of Paul.‡ We are then told that he went to Damascus, and straightway preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. And again, 'that he confounded the Jews, proving that this is very Christ.' This was the object and end of his preaching under the deep impressions of his recent miraculous conversion.

7. The seventh sermon recorded in the Acts is that very interesting and important one delivered by St Peter after the conversion of Cornelius,§ the Roman centurion, the first convert among the Gentiles to the Christian faith, which begins with these admirable words, 'Of a truth I perceive, that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation, he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted of him.' The doctrines in this discourse are these; That God sent

* Acts viii. 5. † Acts viii. 12. ‡ Acts ix. 1—22. § Acts x.

his word to Israel by Jesus Christ; that he anointed him with the holy spirit and with power; that he raised him up the third day, and showed him openly to chosen witnesses; that he hath ordained him to be judge of quick and dead; and that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

8. The next discourse I shall adduce is that of St Paul, when in company with Barnabas he preached before the rulers of the synagogue and the people of Antioch; and is the first we have recorded of him after his conversion.* Having referred his hearers to the ancient dealings of divine providence, he tells them that of the seed of David hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus; that when the rulers at Jerusalem had condemned him, and fulfilled all that was written of him in the Scriptures in putting him to death, God raised him from the dead; that through this man is preached the forgiveness of sins; and that by him, all who believe are justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses; in other words, as I understand it, from those sins from the guilt and punishment of which the law of Moses could not redeem.

9. In the fourteenth chapter we are informed, that Paul and Barnabas, having abode for some time in Iconium, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord, fled from persecution to Lystra, and there were compelled to use all their eloquence to deter the people from sacrificing to them as to Gods, saying,† ‘We are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made

* Acts xiii. 16—41.

† Acts xiv. 15—17.

heaven and earth;' and after this, we find them revisiting these cities and 'confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith,' and reminding them, that it was 'through much tribulation that they must enter into the kingdom of God.'

10. & 11. The fifteenth chapter records the consultation of the Apostles, and the 'result of their council,' with respect to the circumcision of the Gentiles. Peter in concluding his address on this occasion declares his belief,* that Jews as well as Gentiles are to be saved not by works of law but by the grace, or undeserved mercy, of God. James confirms the sentiments of Peter, and as president of the council gives it as his opinion,† that they ought not to impose any unreasonable burdens or demand any conformity to Jewish rites from their Gentile brethren, provided they abstained from things forbidden, i. e. from immoralities, some of which he specifies. These speeches contain no doctrines of general interest, but are worthy of notice as beautiful exhibitions of an enlightened and truly christian liberality.

12. We have in the next chapter the memorable instruction of Paul and Silas, after they had been miraculously released from prison.‡ 'The jailor came trembling and fell down before them, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house; and he was baptized, he and all his straightway.'

* Acts xv. 7—11. † Acts xv. 13—21. ‡ Acts xvi. 29—34.

13. After this we find them at Thessalonica, 'where was a synagogue of the Jews, and Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead, and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.'* This is a general account of the subjects and manner of his preaching, but may be taken as a distinct example.

14. The next sermon we have transmitted is his eloquent address before Areopagus, or the high court of Athens,† in which having in admirable terms asserted the spirituality, creating power and disposing providence of God, he concludes, deducing an argument for immediate repentance from the solemn doctrine, that 'He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, of which he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.'

The eighteenth chapter contains no regular discourse. We are only told, that Paul at Corinth 'reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and testified that Jesus was the Christ.'‡ And that 'a certain Jew, named Apollos, an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus, and being instructed in the way of the Lord, mightily convinced the Jews, publicly shewing by the Scriptures, that Jesus was Christ.'§

15. The twentieth chapter contains the very interesting and affecting address of Paul to the elders of the

* Acts xvii. 1—3.

† Acts xviii. 4, 5.

‡ Acts xvii. 22—31.

§ Acts xviii. 24—28.

church at Ephesus.* He appeals to them for the fidelity and humility with which he had served them; that he was pure from the blood of all men; that he had not coveted their goods; that his own hands had ministered to his necessities; that as to doctrine and instruction he had kept back nothing that was profitable, testifying repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. He speaks of his own afflictions and of his desire to finish the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. He exhorts them to take heed to themselves and to the church of which the holy spirit had made them overseers, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, that 'it is more blessed to give than to receive.' Such is a summary of this interesting sermon.

16. The next is the defence which Paul made before the Jewish multitude,† from whose violence and rage his life was in imminent danger, and from whom he had been rescued only by the interposition of a military force. In this defence nothing is offered but the history of his youth, his miraculous call and his obedience to the heavenly vision.

17. I need just mention the defence,‡ which Paul next attempted to make before the Jewish council, recorded in the twentythird chapter. It is very brief, and entirely personal. There is nothing on matters of faith; except that the Apostle says, 'Of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.'

18. Nearly the same may be remarked of his first defence before Felix, the Roman Governor,§ in which

* Acts xx. 18—35.

† Acts xxiii. 6.

‡ Acts xxii. 1—21.

§ Acts xxiv. 10—21.

however he professes, 'that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets; and have hope towards God, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.' On a subsequent occasion we learn something of the manner and subjects of the Apostle's preaching, from his faithful and alarming address to the avaricious and licentious Felix,† who had sent to hear him concerning the faith in Christ. For 'he reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come,' so that Felix the Roman Governor trembled before Paul the prisoner.'

19. We now come to Paul's celebrated defence of himself before Festus,‡ the successor of Felix in this Jewish province, and before King Agrippa and his Queen Bernice; in which having exhibited a very interesting view of his youth, he repeats the history of his conversion, tells Agrippa that Jesus Christ, whom he had persecuted, appeared to him in person for this purpose, that he might be 'a minister and a witness both of those things which he had seen, and in which he would afterwards appear to him, sending him to the Gentiles to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith, that is in him.' He declares, that in fulfilling this mission he said 'none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come; that Christ should suffer

† Acts xxiv. 25.

‡ Acts xxvi. 1—23.

that he should be the first to rise from the dead, and should show light to the people and to the Gentiles.'

20. The twenty seventh chapter relates the manner in which Paul and his companions were shipwrecked on their way to Rome; and the comfort and encouragement, which he gave them.* There is no reference to any doctrines of faith, peculiar to the gospel; but he powerfully persuades to faith in the divine Providence, of whose gracious and all-powerful protection the chapter gives a most instructive example.

21. In the last chapter we have an account of his arrival at Rome, and of his preaching to those, who resorted to his house.† To the audience who first assembled at his request, he 'expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus;' and when some refused to believe, he applied to them the prophecy of Isaiah, and let them know, that as they rejected it, the salvation of God would be sent to the Gentiles, and that they would receive it. After this it is added, that 'Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came to him; preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence.'

Thus ends the history of the Acts, and with it of the preaching of the Apostles as far as it has been transmitted to us. Thus, with much minuteness and at the expense of some repetition for the sake of fidelity, I have given a summary of the discourses of the Apostles, such as they delivered in fulfilment of their commission to preach the gospel.

* Acts xxvii. 21—26, 33, 34.

† Acts xxviii. 17—31.

Now here are no less than twentyone examples of the sermons, or addresses, delivered by the chosen Apostles and followers of Jesus Christ; in defence of the religion of their Master before an unbelieving multitude; before the chief priests, scribes, lawyers and rulers of the Jews; in the case of Paul, before Roman governors and their courts; when his malignant countrymen were his accusers; when it was of the utmost importance not only for his own safety, (which indeed with the disinterested Apostle was but a secondary consideration,) but for the success of his cause, that he should exhibit the Christian faith in the most clear and explicit terms. That he concealed nothing from fear, we have, besides his own express declaration in various passages, the still more substantial evidence of his patient suffering and finally of his martyrdom in the cause of truth. And we have the same grounds of confidence in all the other Apostles and first preachers of the gospel.

And what is the sum of all these discourses? Do we not find it to be, that Jesus is the Christ? It was on this point that the early teachers of Christianity insisted, alike with Jew and Gentile, before great and small. 'Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.' This simple declaration is the peculiar doctrine of the gospel.* It was the confession of St Peter to his Lord. It is the faith on which Christ himself declared that his Church should be built. It was the faith delivered by the Apostles, and as we have seen, was the great topic of their preaching as recorded in the Book of the Acts.

F. PARKMAN.

* See Locke's 'Reasonableness of Christianity.'

INTERPRETATION—WHAT IS IT?

Interpretation has sometimes been called an art and sometimes a science. These with other hard names that have been given it have done something, I apprehend, to make it appear a more abstruse and difficult matter than it really is. Difficult indeed all must allow it to be, but not in the sense in which many seem to suppose. The work to which it calls us all is not distant and dark, high or deep, removed from common pursuits or out of the reach of common minds. It is not a field parted off from the ordinary walks of life, sacred to the scholar, the theologian, and the philosopher. It is not an art or a science in the learned sense, a mystery and labyrinth to all but the initiated. Every man is initiated into its great principles and highest mysteries by the unavoidable circumstances of life. Every man is an interpreter, and a good one. The science of interpretation is the science of understanding and explaining words, a science whose study we all begin with the beginning of existence. Its province is as large and as common as the province of life, since nothing can be done without words and words are useless unless understood, interpreted.

But in what sense and how far is every man a good interpreter? In the first, the most obvious and natural sense,—that of explaining to himself and for himself the meaning of the words he hears or reads. This, I am aware, is taking a liberty with the common and strictly proper sense of the word interpretation, and I have no wish to darken the subject with new definitions or un-

necessary departures from established usage. Interpretation properly refers to others rather than ourselves; having for its object to explain and not simply to understand. Still it is evident that we must understand before we can explain, we must interpret to ourselves before we can interpret to others, and this seems to me the most simple idea of interpretation. To understand is plainly the first and last object of all interpretation, of all rules and processes in the use of language. And all rules and processes, however simple, common, familiar, unnoticed, by which we arrive at the meaning of the words we hear or read, either for our own information only or for the instruction of others also, are rules and processes of interpretation; and so far as they are correct, conducting us to the *right* meaning of the words, they are sound principles of interpretation. Let this be kept in mind and the first difficulty in regard to this subject may be removed, the idea that it is something aside from our common walk and quite above ordinary reach. That it is so in some of its bearings and uses will be presently shown. But I believe its true nature is to be looked for, its best principles found, in the common operation of the mind while arriving at the true meaning of the words addressed to it, either from the speaking lips or the silent page.

What is this common operation of the mind in arriving at the meaning of words? Is it definite and uniform, or loose and changing? Does it observe any laws, consciously or unconsciously? There can be no doubt that it does observe some laws. How far they are definite and unchanging, to what degree the mind is conscious of observing them, depends upon its own habits of dis-

cipline, attention, study, fidelity, and various circumstances that need not be enumerated. There are some laws common to all and never disregarded, because founded in nature and necessity. For instance, the child, to whom words are new and of course only sounds at first, cannot understand them until he has heard the same several times and observed that they relate always to the same or similar things; and whenever they occur, his mind reverts to their previous use and his previous understanding of them. The man does the same, only to a greater extent and more accurately. The scholar, the critic, goes through the same process, with no difference but that of a still more extended and discriminating view. Again, the child watches the countenance and motions of the person speaking, and endeavors to understand the general purpose of the words, knowing that these laws, if we may call them so, will guide and help him to perceive the particular meaning and purpose. This we all do, young and old, rude and polished, ignorant and learned, in every conversation. So the faithful interpreter of conversation, when he would convey to others what he himself heard, will present as much as he can of the looks, gesture, character and general design of the speaker as helps and guides to the exact meaning. And to these guides correspond the principles, laws and processes by which the professional interpreter is governed or should be governed, in attempting first to ascertain himself, and then to explain to others the meaning of manuscripts and books of any age in any language. He must learn as much as he can of the character, the condition, the general design, the particular

aim or emphasis of the writer, and let these shape the interpretation of every part and the whole.

We find then two principles of interpretation growing out of the very nature and necessity of things, suggesting themselves spontaneously, and operating universally upon minds of every order and degree of cultivation, in the common occurrences as well as the rare intellectual demands of life. These principles are, a knowledge of the language to be interpreted, and a knowledge of the whole condition and design of the speaker or writer. Without either of these, no man can interpret any thing. Having the first but not the last, he may do something but will be liable to great mistake. He will be a truly good interpreter only in proportion to his command of these two kinds of knowledge and his ability and fidelity in the use of them. There may be other qualifications essential to the character of a good interpreter, but I do not now think of any that may not be comprised in these. For these comprise a great deal, as a little examination will convince us. The knowledge supposed is not common in any high degree or varied relation. We may be confident of our knowledge of words which have always been familiar to us, our native tongue. We may be confident of our knowledge of the character, the feelings and purposes of our intimate friends and frequent correspondents. Such knowledge we all have, and it makes it easy for us to understand at once letters addressed to us and writings of our own day in our own language; though even there the subject must be one with which we are thoroughly acquainted or we are not a little troubled, and our most common letters may touch upon events which not being known or

known but in part require us to call for more information or a better interpreter. Still it is true for the most part that we find no difficulty in interpreting the writings of our own nation and age. This I had in mind in saying that every man is a good interpreter. It is true of all books and subjects with which he is daily conversant. He reads them with ease and understanding. And whether it be as a reader only or also as an interpreter for others, he is guided by those general principles which have just been mentioned.

But if these principles and the knowledge that supports and applies them are all that is needed, why should interpretation ever be difficult? Simply because this knowledge is not possessed in all cases, and cannot be obtained. A thorough acquaintance with the language, the writer, the subject, and the times, with all their relations and circumstances, is not within our reach except as regards the productions of a recent period, and our own or possibly one or two other languages. Books written even in the last century in a foreign country and a foreign tongue can be read and interpreted with entire confidence and accuracy by very few. They may make themselves masters of the language, but they cannot know all the nameless circumstances by which the meaning of a particular writer may be affected. And if it be so with writings of the last century, how much more with those two or three centuries old? The difficulty of course increases with the distance; until at last, running back to the beginning of the Christian era and even to the beginning of the world, it may seem hardly possible that interpretation can be any thing more than conjecture.

Is it strange then that the interpretation of our sacred writings, which are among the oldest in existence, is not easy? What does it demand? To be perfect, it demands a thorough knowledge of the languages in which they were originally written, of the people by whom and to whom they were written, of the natural, intellectual, political, social, moral character of the age, and much more. This knowledge is demanded in order to give us entire confidence in the thoroughness and exactness of our interpretation of the sacred books. It is not necessary that all should have this knowledge, for a few may interpret for the many. It is not necessary to possess it in the highest degree, for with much less we may obtain sufficient information and confidence for all essential points of faith and duty. But it is clear that our information and confidence will be proportioned to the degree and accuracy of this knowledge, and the ability and fairness with which it is used in the principles of interpretation.

Nothing can be more common than these remarks. It is for this reason that I have made them, because they are common, because their truth is self-evident and the principles they involve natural and universal, while at the same time they are the first and great principles of the science of interpretation. They are the principles of nature and common sense, and therefore the best of all principles. That they are as applicable to the Bible as to any book, I need not say. It is a doctrine not openly questioned by any now to my knowledge, that the Scriptures are to be interpreted by the same principles and processes as other books. Professor Stuart says, (I give I believe his very words, and they are certainly as strong as they

are just,) 'If there be any book on earth that is addressed to the reason and common sense of mankind, the Bible is preeminently that book.' I may attempt hereafter to make some application of these principles of reason and common sense to particular parts of the Scriptures, with a view to illustrate both the principles and the passages also.

At present one use if no other may be made of what has been offered, common as it is. It may rebuke that spirit of complaint and distrust, which often shows itself on account of the widely different results to which readers and interpreters of the Bible arrive. We see one cause of this difference, a natural, guiltless, unavoidable cause, in these first simple principles of interpretation which all adopt. For while there are, as there always must be, very unequal degrees of knowledge, in languages, history, religion, and all that bears upon interpretation, this diversity must appear in the conclusions to which men are brought under the direction of such knowledge. This will account for a great deal of the variety of faith and form around us, without considering the other diverse influences of every possible nature and power, under which different classes and individuals approach the study and interpretation of the Scriptures. Candid observation with proper self examination and self distrust will at least convince us that it is not necessary, either to distrust the wisdom and equity of Him who gave us these writings and these minds, or to suspect our dissenting brethren of unrighteous motives and dishonest practices.

E. B. HALL.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

This is the first portion of Scripture with which childhood becomes acquainted, and the last that is forgotten amidst the estranging influences of the world. It is consecrated by the associations of parental tenderness and piety. Before we could read a page of the sacred volume, many of us were taught to offer our infant devotion in the words, 'Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.' It has mingled with the prayers of our riper years. It has met the response of our hearts, as it has been often heard from the pulpit. It will make a part of the private and public worship of our children and of distant generations. It is the Lord's prayer, the prayer which Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, the lover and the beloved of our souls, gave as a model to his disciples, and which we may believe he used in his own communion with his Father. Having these various and strong claims on our regard, no inquiry respecting its origin, purpose, meaning or character can be unwelcome.

It has been already observed (page 54), that our Lord in framing this prayer borrowed expressions from forms with which many if not most of his hearers must have been acquainted. The importance which the Jewish teachers ascribed to worship led them to prepare forms for their disciples, some very brief, others of greater length. How far Jesus adopted their language cannot be exactly determined, as the Rabbinical writings which we may consult are of a date posterior to his time; but there can be no reasonable doubt after examining them,

that he did not intend to deliver a series of *original* petitions. No injury is done to our Lord's character or office by supposing him to have chosen the words of others. His wisdom was as clearly evinced in selecting what was suitable for his disciples, and what may have been already from use familiar and sacred with them, as if he had constructed sentences of an entirely new form. The form only, and not the sentiment would have been new. The latter was then in existence, connected indeed with much that was false and puerile, in the lessons of the Jewish schools; and to have avoided these for the mere sake of novelty or singularity would have betrayed a weakness to which Jesus was always superior. Instead of being troubled by the fact that much of the Lord's prayer may be traced to a Jewish origin, I esteem it a mark of the wisdom and purity which distinguished his whole life, in its least particular as in its general course.

The purpose of Christ in giving this prayer is indicated by the words which in Matthew immediately precede it, and by the occasion on which, as Luke informs us, it was again prescribed. 'One of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.' (Luke xi. 1.) Give us a model of devotion. Teach us what should be the nature and complexion of our addresses to Heaven. Not only do the different teachers among our countrymen give their pupils instruction of this kind, but John your forerunner taught his disciples how to frame their supplications. We would receive from our Master a pattern, one which may serve as a guide to show us what trains of thought our minds should pursue and what modes of address we

should adopt when we pray. Matthew records as the words of Jesus, 'Do you pray after this manner.' It was far from his intention, we may believe, to shut up the piety of his disciples within the few petitions which follow, or to enjoin their use on every occasion of worship. The Apostles could not have so understood him at the time, and that they did not afterwards attach any such meaning to his direction is clear from the prayers recorded in the book of the Acts, and from many passages in the Epistles; which prove beyond a doubt that the early ministers of Christianity did not regard the Lord's prayer as more than a general expression of the spirit and nature of their devotion—a collection of indices or hints, if I may so speak, to point out the topics on which they should dwell with most frequency and earnestness, and also the temper which should sustain their entreaties when they 'came before God' to 'make known their requests by prayer and supplication.'

If we inquire into the meaning of the several expressions that compose this prayer, we should pay a careful regard to the circumstances under which it was delivered by Christ to his disciples and must have been first used by them. The Messiah long and anxiously expected by the whole nation had appeared in the person of Jesus, but few received him in that character and the triumphs of his reign had not yet begun to disclose themselves even to his disciples. They were Jews, who held the unity of God in opposition to the polytheism of the Heathen world, and whose first desire must be that the supremacy of the one only God, whom the Jewish people regarded as the Father of their nation, (Isai. lxi. 16, John viii. 41) might be acknowledged over

the whole earth;—‘Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.’ The next wish of their hearts was, that the Messiah’s kingdom might be openly and gloriously established;—‘thy kingdom come;’ for the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven, and the Messiah’s kingdom or reign were equivalent expressions among the Jews. The universal recognition of the divine will and the submission of all mankind to the commands of Jehovah, would naturally follow in the order of requests from those who had offered the previous petitions;—‘thy will be done as in heaven so on earth.’ The disciples of Jesus were the ministers to whom the accomplishment of these great objects would be committed. They would announce and spread the truth respecting God and Christ and human duty, would bear it from village to village of Judea and from city to city of the Pagan world, leaving their usual means of support and devoting themselves wholly to ‘the work of the gospel.’ They must rely on divine Providence in a peculiar sense for the supply of their wants, and might ask, not for abundance, but for what should be needful as the daily nourishment of life;—‘give us this day our necessary food.’ They were frail men, and in the discharge of their ministry would meet with many provocations to distrust or unfaithfulness and also to anger and resentment. They must forgive those who injured them, and ask pardon for their own errors;—‘forgive us our offences as we also forgive them who wrong us.’ In view of the temptations to discouragement and sin which their daily experience would lead them to anticipate for the future, they should look to God for timely succor and implore him to conduct them

along such paths of service as they might pursue without betraying the cause of their Master or sacrificing the peace of their souls;—‘bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’

This explanation shows us the pertinency as well as the meaning of the Lord's prayer. It was a prayer for his early disciples, adapted to their circumstances and comprehending the great topics which either their faith or their experience might suggest. He who combined its different parts into one perfect whole, who included within so narrow a compass the truths and wants which would be the chief objects of regard with his disciples through their future course, must have had a knowledge and judgment beyond those of uninspired intelligence.

The same expressions when used by us must be taken in a somewhat different sense. God is no longer esteemed the Father of one nation, but of every human being. Heaven is not the seat of a local sovereignty, but the world, the state, the universe of spiritual life and holiness and felicity. We are indeed conscious of the same sentiment that ruled in the breast of an Apostle, when we pray that the name of God may be known and revered, and that his will may be done. But the kingdom which the first disciples of Christ were instrumental in establishing has ‘come,’ it has been on earth many centuries; and when we repeat the second petition of the Lord's prayer, we can only signify our wish that the truth of which Jesus was the founder may reign in every heart that professes allegiance, and be extended through every land on the globe. We are not called to services like those which separated the imme-

diate followers of our Lord from their homes, and obliged them to leave the supply of their natural wants to the care of Providence; we therefore ask our 'necessary food' for the day in the spirit of a less particular (though as absolute a) reliance on the divine power and goodness, and under these terms comprehend a wider variety of blessings. So likewise when we implore forgiveness 'as we forgive,' with a coincidence in the general meaning and intent of the petition, there is a difference between our circumstances of trial and those of the Apostles, which produces a slight difference of shade in the thought. The same remark is true of the last clause. In a word, this prayer was adapted to the peculiar condition of them for whom it was composed, and when used by us undergoes a change of meaning in some parts inconsiderable but in others more important. It should be remarked, that the Apostles in the course of their ministry would gradually pass from the ideas which they first connected with its sentences towards those which we associate with them.

If this be a correct view of the Lord's prayer, it may be paraphrased at the present day as follows.

Our Father, who dwellest in perfect purity and happiness; reverence and homage be thine; let it please Thee to increase the influence and extend the knowledge of that truth on which thy Son laid the foundation of his spiritual kingdom; may prompt obedience be rendered to thy commands and acquiescence in thy purposes be manifested alike by heavenly spirits and by men; furnish us by thy blessing on our daily labors with what is necessary for the maintenance and proper enjoyment of life; grant us the pardon of our sins as we forgive

those from whom we receive any cause of offence ; and expose us not to trials beyond what we may be enabled to bear without injury to our faith or virtue.*

This prayer is distinguished by its brevity, its comprehensiveness, and the tone of benevolent and devout sentiment which pervades it. Its brevity is apparent at a glance. Its comprehensiveness will be perceived on the least examination of the ideas which it embraces. The paternal character and supreme dominion of God, the propriety of universal reverence, obedience and submission to Him, the divine origin and excellence of Christianity, the desire which every Christian must feel for its diffusion, our natural and constant wants with our dependence on the divine care, our frailty and sinfulness with the duty of brotherly kindness in our social connexions, our exposure to difficulty and danger in the spiritual life with our need of assistance from Him who appoints our discipline, are all brought distinctly to view. Our relations to God and man, our temporal and spiritual necessities, our personal desires and our hopes for the world are crowded without confusion into this short compend. The tone is that of filial piety and generous philanthropy. These sentiments are demanded by the first words, and belong to the whole composition. The remark of Dr Clarke, though slightly fanciful, is worthy of notice ; ‘ The word, Father, placed here at the beginning of this prayer includes two grand ideas, which should serve as a foundation to all our petitions ; 1st, that tender and respectful love which we should feel for God, such as that which children feel for their fathers ; 2dly, that strong confidence in God’s

* See note on Matt. vi. 13, page 57.

love to us, such as fathers have for their children. Thus all the petitions in this prayer stand in strictest reference to the word, Father; the first three referring to the love we have for God, and the three last to that confidence which we have in the love he bears to us.' In like manner it may be said, that the prayer is equally divided between supplication for others and for ourselves; the first three clauses expressing our desire that others may be filled with the knowledge and love of God, the last three our sense of personal wants; while even in one of these our social duty is mentioned in express terms.

Nor are these all the points of excellence that belong to the Lord's prayer. For while 'it comprises those petitions which the relations and consciousness of every member of the human family render it proper for him to offer, it omits, if the view which I have given of its present meaning be taken as correct, whatever is peculiar to one class in the community or one age of the world. In every language into which it has been translated, and in every country which the gospel has visited in its progress for eighteen centuries, this prayer has with equal propriety been made a part of Christian worship for the church and the closet. Through all this lapse of time it has remained, and should the world stand still remain for as long a period hence, the model and the breviary of devotion with all who acknowledge its author as the Son of God.

Yet it should not be forgotten that the Lord's prayer had a peculiar application to the circumstances of the first disciples, and that some of its terms are diverted from their original intent when used in the sense in

which alone they could or can be adopted by subsequent believers. It may also deserve inquiry, whether this prayer is suited to the early years of childhood. It is composed of general expressions; which exceed the grasp of the infant faculties. Some exercise and enlargement of the mind are necessary to comprehend truths of such magnitude. The prayers of childhood if offered with intelligence will not only consist of short sentences and easy words, such as are found in this prayer, but will present ideas of very limited extent. I doubt therefore the propriety of teaching little children to repeat the Lord's prayer as a part of their morning and evening worship. I fear both that too little pains are taken to explain it and that the attempt will seldom be satisfactory, while I cannot entertain the least doubt that it is better for them 'to speak five words with' their own 'understanding,' however childish the sentence formed of these words may seem, than to pronounce any prayer of whatever origin or value without a distinct apprehension of its meaning.

SKETCH OF THE MOSAIC INSTITUTIONS.

[From the Preface to the First Volume of Geddes's Bible.]

In selecting this article in preference to others on the same subject that might have been taken, I have been determined principally by a regard to its length. It forms a part of the Preface to the first volume of a work entitled, 'The Holy Bible or the Books accounted

sacred, otherwise called the Books of the Old and New Covenants, faithfully translated from the corrected Texts of the Originals, with various readings, explanatory notes and critical remarks. By the Rev. Alexander Geddes, LL. D.' Three volumes only, in quarto, were published in London in 1792, 1797, and 1800; the two first containing translation with brief notes of the Books of the Old Testament from Genesis to 2 Chronicles inclusive with the Book of Ruth, and the last critical remarks on these books. Dr Geddes was a native of Scotland, but was a member and priest of the Roman Catholic Church. The freedom with which he expressed his opinions and the character of some of them drew on him censure both from Catholics and Protestants. He admitted the inspiration of Moses in a very qualified sense, and his remarks have often a tone of offensive levity. But he possessed much learning, and the abstract of the Mosaic laws which I have copied, though brief, is prepared with skill and judgment. Those readers who wish for a more full survey of these institutions, but have not access to the works of Lowman, Michaelis, or other writers who have made them subjects of deep study, may consult with pleasure the first volume of Milman's admirable History of the Jews, or may derive some instruction from a recent work on Palestine by Dr Russell,* whose two chapters on the 'History of the Hebrew Commonwealth,' and the 'Literature and Religious Usages of the Ancient Hebrews,' are however quite unsatisfactory.

* 'Palestine, or the Holy Land. From the earliest period to the present time By Rev. Michael Russell LL. D.' 1 vol. Reprinted in Harper's Family Library.

‘The theology and jurisprudence of the Pentateuch are every where so intermingled that they may be said to be but one miscellaneous code. I will try however to decompound them, and reduce each separate branch into such a regular series of dogmas and decrees as seem naturally to arise one out of another.

The *speculative* part of Mosaic divinity is extremely concise; and summed up in the belief of one supreme God, the creator and governor of the heavens and the earth, and subordinate beings called his angels or messengers. His absolute attributes are omnipotence and omniscience. He is also represented as just, benevolent, long-suffering, and merciful; but these qualities are clothed in colors that inspire rather fear than love; the empire of this latter was long after to be established by a greater lawgiver than Moses.

Of God’s angels we learn nothing, but that they always appeared in a human form and spoke the language of man. Of bad angels, I find no mention made in the whole Pentateuch; unless it be supposed that they are alluded to in Levit. xvii. 7, and Deut. xxxii. 17.

The *practical* theology of the Hebrew legislator is of much greater extent; and may be subdivided into two parts—the moral and the ritual.

The *former* is short, and contained in the decalogue, or ten commandments; and even some of these, to speak strictly, appertain rather to jurisprudence than to divinity. However that be, we Christians are assured by our divine legislator, that all moral religion is contained in them, and even reducible to a still narrower compass, the love of God and the love of our neighbor.

As to the *ritual* part of the Hebrew religion, it will

ever at first sight to thoughtless and superficial readers appear an overgrown mass of trivial or unimportant ceremonies; but if we consider the view with which, the time when, and the people for whom, this ritual was compiled, we shall soon be convinced, I presume, that it was compiled with great judgment and with a more than ordinary knowledge of the human heart. The view of the compiler or composer was, to establish and secure the worship of the one true God; and, consequently to prevent idolatry, to which his people were so prone and had been so long accustomed in the land of Egypt. Very wisely therefore he makes a composition with them on bringing them out of that land; to which in spite of his indulgence they more than once threatened to return. 'Ye shall still (said he) have a public pompous worship; ye shall have a tabernacle, an altar, priests, sacrifices, ceremonies, festivals, as other nations have; only apply and appropriate all this to the worship of the Lord, the God of Israel.' This concession must have been extremely agreeable to a sensual grovelling people; who had never learned, and were not yet prepared to learn what it is to adore in spirit and in truth.—But the Hebrew legislator, in borrowing from the Egyptians and perhaps from the Midianites many of his religious rites and ceremonies, was careful to select those only that were in their nature either innocent or indifferent, and purified from every abuse that tended to promote idolatry or licentiousness.

To secure uniformity of worship, he restricts it to one particular place; no one is allowed to slaughter or offer victims but before the Lord, that is, at a tabernacle dedicated to his name and in which he was supposed to

reside. To render this residence the more respectable, it was constructed of the most precious materials, worked up with the greatest art, and decorated in the most splendid manner. A particular part of it was separated from the rest, denominated the most holy place; into which none but the high priest was permitted to enter. There, in a chest overlaid with gold, were deposited the tables of the covenant; and the corner of this chest, ornamented with cherubs, was considered as the throne of God. Thence he gave his responses, and thither the adoration of his people was directed; but no sort of semblance of him was exhibited to their view, nor were they even allowed to see at all the inside of the tabernacle, lest any representation there might mislead their imaginations. For the same reason, the strongest injunctions were given them utterly to destroy all the images and statues which they should find depicted or erected by the Canaanites to their gods. How expedient, how necessary, these precautions were, is verified by the whole tenor of the history of the Hebrews, who in spite of such precautions were constantly relapsing into idol-worship.

A multitude of sacrifices were ordained, or encouraged, with a view of keeping a dispersed people united to one another and to their common God. A weekly and septennial Sabbath, three great annual Festivals, an annual Fast, a day of general humiliation, a Jubilee every fiftieth year—all tended to the same great purposes.

Such a number of sacrifices and solemnities required a numerous priesthood. To prevent continual jealousies, altercation and caballing, the sacred functions in general were assigned to one particular tribe, the

office of priests in ordinary to one particular family, and that of high-priest to the elder son of that family, forever. The rest of the tribe were called simply Levites, and were divided into three castes or classes. Each of these had their peculiar offices about the tabernacle; but all of them were subservient to the priests, as these were subordinate to the high-priest.

Though none but the sons of a priest could regularly be admitted into the priesthood, yet every son of a priest was not admissible. Bastardy, infamy, and any sort of bodily blemish, were sufficient to exclude him: much more, we may justly suppose, mental defects and flagrant crimes. All priests were consecrated and initiated into their office with many ceremonies, but the dignity of high-priest was conferred with singular solemnity and splendor. A special degree of sanctity was required of them; nor were they permitted to exercise any sacerdotal function in a state of uncleanness.

Another care of the Hebrew legislator was, to banish from religious worship every sort of indecency, profaneness and abomination. The horrid rites of Moloch and the lewd ones of Baal-peor were equally proscribed. The superlative holiness and purity of the God of the Israelites are constantly inculcated on their minds, as a most powerful motive to make them abhor and avoid every species of impiety, intemperance and debauchery, that disgraced the worship of the surrounding nations. The altar of the Lord is so sacred that none but priests may approach it; nor they even with polluted hands. The very victims must be without blemish, and of a mild, domestic nature; no carnivorous nor obscene animal can be offered as a sacrifice. In short, nothing

could be better contrived to inspire a gross people with sentiments of awful reverence for the Deity, than the whole religious ritual of Moses.

Nor are his *political* laws less admirably adapted to the situation of the Hebrew people. They were all but one great family, though distinguished into twelve tribes; all children of Israel.—The scheme of government which Moses presents to them is a pure republic, in the best sense of the word; but under the immediate or mediate control of the Deity.* A written law is given them; but its explanation in all dubious cases is referred to the high-priest, who is supposed to hold consultations with God and from God to receive his decisions, disobedience to which is made a capital crime.—All magistrates, judges, and other public officers, were to be chosen by the people out of the wisest and best of every tribe. From these again were selected the senate, or national council, consisting of seventy persons: at least such was their number in the days of Moses.†

The administration of *justice* was to be strictly impartial; no respect for persons was to be shewn; no bribes were to be received. The rich and the poor, the stranger and the native, were to be tried by the same rules, and convicted on the same proofs. On the testimony of a single witness, no sentence of condemnation might be passed. If a witness were found to have given a false testimony, he must undergo the penalty of the crime with which he had charged his neighbor.

* Hence it has been called a Theocracy.

† I enter not here into the controversy concerning the duration of this institution.

To Europeans in general, and particularly to us more northern nations, the *penal* code of Moses must appear in some respects too severe, and perhaps in others not sufficiently so. Some crimes were punished with death for which we have hardly any punishment at all; while some of our most capital crimes might be redeemed by a pecuniary mulct. But from this it would be unfair to conclude that our system of penal laws is the better of the two. It would not, I think, be difficult to shew, that theirs is in some instances relatively superior, that is, more dexterously suited to the genius and manners of the people for whom it was made. The chief crimes punishable with death by the Mosaic law were, idolatry, blasphemy, apostacy, sorcery of every kind, sabbath-breaking, gross undutifulness to parents, wilful murder, detected adultery, the rape of a betrothed virgin, incest of various degrees, sodomy, and bestiality: but lying, deceiving, false swearing, striking, wounding, mere man-slaughter, and every sort of stealth, (save stealing an Israelite,) were not accounted capital.

I find but two sorts of legal capital punishments mentioned in the Pentateuch—overwhelming with stones or darts, and burning with fire. The former seems to have been the more usual one. Sometimes they were joined; that is, the person was first stoned to death and then burned. In posterior times, the Talmudists tell us, beheading and strangling were in use. Crimes not capital were punished by fines, flagellation, and the law of talion, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, &c. Sins not punished corporally or by mulct were atoned for by sacrifice.

The *municipal* laws of Moses must be allowed, I

think, to be excellent on the whole and almost exceptionable in every part. Although he makes no formal declaration of the rights of man, all his decrees relative to property and personal safety are evidently founded on that principle. In the eye of the law all Israelites are equal, and all capable of being raised to the highest civil offices in the state. The land is to be shared out among them in the most just proportion; and every possible precaution is taken to prevent the alienation or diminution of territorial inheritance. Neither land nor houses may be sold but conditionally and for a certain space of time. The first owners or their next of kin may at any period redeem them, and at the jubilee may reclaim them without a price.—The poor, the widow, and the orphan, are bountifully provided for by a number of laws, or of counsels equivalent to laws, repeated so often and enforced with so persuasive arguments that they could not fail of producing their intended effects, and give us a most favorable idea of the benevolence and philanthropy of the lawgiver.—Brotherly love and good neighborhood are enjoined or recommended in the strongest terms. The interests of one's neighbor must be one's own; his landmarks must not be removed; his strayed cattle must be kept and restored; his fallen beast of burden must be helped up; his deposits must be faithfully returned; and what hath been stolen from him repaid with indemnification. To a native, and even to a sojourner, one must lend without demanding interest; and if a pledge be required, it must be such as the borrower can give without great inconvenience. The mercenary is to receive his hire on the day he earns it. The slave even who has served

his time is not to be dismissed empty handed. No one is to be oppressed or hardly dealt with.

It may readily be presumed, that if property were thus secured and poverty thus relieved, *personal* safety would not certainly be neglected. The person of a Hebrew was sacred; to hurt or maim him, was punished by a rigorous talion; to murder or sell him, with death. The voluntary, deliberate man-slayer might be killed by the next relation of the murdered; but an asylum was prepared to receive and protect the unwary and unmalicious homicide. No one might be condemned either to death or other punishment but on the evidence of two or more witnesses. No one sentenced to be scourged might receive more than forty stripes. If an Israelite sell himself to an Israelite, he must not be treated as a common slave; and must moreover, if he choose it, obtain his freedom in the seventh year, and sooner if the jubilee intervene. But if he have sold himself to a sojourning stranger, he may either redeem himself or be redeemed by a friend at any time. With regard to slaves captured in war, or bought from strangers, the law is not so favorable. These are the perpetual property of the purchaser, but even these are ordered to be treated with lenity. If one of them die under the rod of correction, the master must suffer for it; if he lose an eye or a tooth, he must have his liberty. If a female slave be debauched or betrothed by her master or his son, she must be treated as a secondary wife or restored to freedom.

The *matrimonial* laws of Moses will appear singular to those only who are totally unacquainted with ancient Oriental usages. Beauty was not there sacrificed to

sordid interest, but bought by generous love. The bridegroom purchased the partner of his bed with a suitable dowry; hence she became his real property, but by no means his slave. Her dues of every sort were secured to her by law; and if she were ill-treated, she might leave her husband and return to her father's house. Polygamy was indeed permitted, as well as concubinage;* but with so many restraints and obligations as must have made both exceedingly rare, unless among the richer class.

From the laws relative to *succession* it appears, that every man's possessions were to be equally shared among his sons, save that the first-born had a double portion. The daughters seem to have had only marriage-gifts, on leaving their fathers' or brothers' houses. But if a man had no sons to represent him, his daughters became co-heirs of his estate and were obliged to marry in their own tribe.

These laws and injunctions were common to all the Israelites, but the Levites having no landed inheritances except towns and their suburbs were secured in the possession of these by particular clauses; and their ordinary subsistence was amply provided for by the tithes, first-fruits and free-will offerings of the other tribes.

Of the laws of *war*, which the reader may see in the xxth chapter of Deuteronomy, I shall only say that some of them appear too sanguinary; but most probably they were not more so than the general usage of those times authorized.

Not only were the property, liberty, and personal

* A sort of secondary or *left-hand* marriage. It is still customary in the East.

safety of the Hebrews secured by the wise regulations of their lawgiver : his provident attention was extended even to their *health, prosperity and population*. The great number of observances that regard bodily cleanliness, the choice of salutary food, the prevention of contagious diseases, the cultivation of the ground, the breeding of flocks and herds, the encouragement of early marriage, and the most scrupulous delicacy in the use of connubial rites, &c. are all admirably contrived for those ends, and consequently for the greatest happiness of social life.

On the whole I may venture to say, that in whatever light we consider the Mosaic jurisprudence, it will bear a comparison with any other of antiquity ; and that the legislator might confidently affirm, like Solon, that if his laws were not the very best that might be devised they were the best his nation could bear. Not more than this needs to be allowed them, even by those who believe them to be the immediate offspring of God and admit inspiration in its utmost latitude. As for us Christians, we are taught to consider them in certain respects as weak and defective elements, serving only to conduct us to the more perfect law of the gospel of Jesus.

Beside the special *penalties* appointed for the transgression of such and such laws, the Hebrew lawgiver employs two other pressing motives to enforce the observance of them. To the obedient he promises on the part of Heaven blessings of every sort ; to the disobedient he denounces maledictions of every kind. A long and happy life, a numerous offspring, prolific flocks and herds, plenty of corn, wine and oil, abundance of every thing are to be the lot of the former ; while

the latter are threatened with every calamity that can be conceived. It is remarkable however that among all those rewards and punishments there is not, as far as I can see, the least hint of future retribution in another world. This doctrine seems to have been introduced into the Jewish creed, at a much later period.

ON THE BAPTISMAL COMMAND.

The evangelist Matthew informs us according to the common version, (Matt. xxviii. 19,) that immediately before our Lord's ascension he instructed his apostles to 'go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' On this verse is founded the practice, which prevails in almost all the churches of England and America, of repeating these words at the baptism of either a child or an adult. Yet there is no passage of Scripture of which it can be more conclusively shown that the common translation is wrong; and although the error may not seem very important, still in a formulary of such solemn and frequent use we should desire the utmost accuracy. The error lies in the little word, *in*. 'I baptize thee,' says the minister, 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' On the score of good taste, not to say of propriety—and I know not why taste should be refused connexion with religion—the term *spirit* is preferable to the old word *ghost*, which now with the single exception of

its use in respect to the Deity, the Being of whom we ought to speak in terms of peculiar reverence, is found only in the stories of childish fear or ignorant superstition. But this is not the error that I had in mind. 'I baptize in the name.'^{*} To do a thing in the name of another, is to act or to pretend to act by authority derived from him, to appear as his messenger or representative. An ambassador negotiates with a foreign power in the name of his king or country. An inspired prophet speaks in the name of God. The Apostles taught and cured the sick in the name of Christ. 'I am come,' said Jesus, 'in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.'^{*} And again, in reply to the complaint of his disciples that they saw a man casting out demons in his name who followed not with them, he said, 'There is no man who shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me.'[†]

This use of the expression is frequent in the New Testament. But this is not the sense in which it is used in the form of baptism. The minister does not mean that he acts in the administration of that ordinance as the representative or messenger of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, nor that he acts by authority derived from them. This last he may or may not believe to be the fact, but he never, I presume, intends to signify it by these words. What then does he mean, and what is the proper sense of the original?

Baptism among the Jews was a sign of proselytism or discipleship. Heathens who became Jews were baptized,

^{*} John v. 43.

[†] Mark ix. 39.

Jews who acknowledged the divine mission of John the forerunner of the Messiah were baptized, and both Jews and Heathens upon professing belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God were baptized. Baptism therefore in the hands of the Apostles was the sign or pledge,—the sign in respect to the individual, the pledge in respect to the community,—of relationship to Christ as the founder of a new religion. They were directed to go and *mark* men as disciples of that religion whose prominent peculiarities were these three doctrines—that there is but one God, the Father of the universe, that Jesus Christ was the Son of his love and the inspired messenger of his will, and that the divine spirit given to the Apostles and other preachers of the gospel in supernatural endowments of knowledge and power enabled them to declare the truth and to give miraculous evidence of their ministry. They baptized converts as a sign of their receiving and professing these doctrines, which might be considered the outlines of the new religion within which all its truths and precepts were included.

In the Hebrew language 'the name of' a person is a redundant form of speech, meaning nothing more than the person himself. The Greek of the New Testament is full of Hebrew idioms, and this occurs among the rest. Matt. i. 21, 'Thou shalt call his name,' i. e. him, 'Jesus.' John ii. 23, 'Many believed in his name,' i. e. in him; as is proved by John iii. 18, where the two expressions are used as of equal force in the same verse; 'He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in [on] the name of the only be-

gotten Son of God. Many other examples might be added, but these are sufficient to show that in Matt. xxviii. 19, the words, 'the name of,' are redundant, and do not signify by authority, or as the representative of

But what is meant by baptism into the Father, Son, and holy spirit? What I before said;—the expression by the use of this rite of faith in the paternal character of God, the divine mission of Christ, and the inspiration of his immediate followers; or in other words, the acknowledgement of the divine origin and miraculous propagation of Christianity. The new disciple was baptized into Jesus Christ,* i. e. signified that he owned him as Master. Paul in speaking of the people of Israel who went out of Egypt under the conduct of Moses says, they 'were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.†' For an explanation of this passage we need only turn to Exodus xiv. 31, where we are told that after the miracle which took place at the Red Sea, 'the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and his servant Moses,' that is, had faith in the leader whom Jehovah had given them. In the Epistles of Paul we meet with the expression 'baptized into Jesus Christ,‡' and 'baptized into Christ;§' in both instances the connexion shows, that by this baptism into Christ the Apostle understood a profession of faith in the declarations which he and his brethren had made respecting the mission and life of their Master.

This then I believe was the meaning of our Lord when he directed his disciples to 'go and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and the Son and the holy spirit;' that they should invite

* Acts ii. 38. † 1 Cor. x. 2. ‡ Rom. vi. 3. § Galat. iii. 27.

men to express by this symbol their faith in that religion, of which God was the author, which he had been the chosen instrument of conveying to the world, and of which they would be the inspired teachers to mankind. Now as I have already shown that the common translation of this passage requires a different meaning, one which the original does not support, it is evident that the change, though to the ear it will seem very small, is important and ought to be made. That the nature of this correction may be perfectly understood, I will quote two texts in which the different meanings will be seen in contrast. When Peter healed the lame man at the gate of the temple, as we read in Acts iii. 1—8, he said to him, 'In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk;' which was the same as saying; By the authority given me by Jesus Christ I command thee to walk. In 1 Corinthians i. 13, Paul asks, 'Were ye baptized in [into] the name of Paul;' i.e. were you baptized as my disciples, did you acknowledge me as the author of that religion which you accepted, the head of that community of believers into which you were received? No, is the obvious reply, not me, but Christ. In this text the words relate to the persons addressed, they express *their* faith; in the passage from Acts the words relate to the speaker, they signify *his* authority.

If this is the grammatical sense of the words recorded by Matthew, it is doubtless the sense in which they were received by the Apostles. So far as the phrase, 'in the name of,' is concerned, it is probably the sense in which the passage is understood by almost every minister who repeats it in the office of baptism. The

present translation conveys a different meaning. Ought it not then to be changed? When an infant is baptized, the use of the ordinance signifies not the child's faith but the faith of the parents, their wish that it should be considered one of the children of a Christian community, and their purpose of instructing it in the truths of the Christian religion.

It has been and certainly may be made a question, whether our Lord intended to give a form of words to be repeated at every administration of the rite. The passage, which is found in only one of the evangelists, does not require such an interpretation; and we do not learn either from the history of the Acts or from the Epistles that the Apostles at any time used this form. We may therefore be allowed to consider the command as a general charge to make and baptize converts, and not as an injunction concerning the words which should be pronounced.

OF CRUCIFIXION.

[From Harwood's Introduction.]

The explanation of passages in the Epistles may recommend the first part of this article to perusal, while the description with which it is principally occupied—of the sufferings through which our Lord must have passed when 'he died the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God,' may give us a more vivid conception of the strength of his philanthropy, and at

the same time may confirm our faith in the narrative of the evangelists by exhibiting the coincidence of their accounts with the usages of that time.

—
‘Crucifixion was a punishment, which the ancients inflicted only on the most notorious criminals and malefactors. It is one of the most cruel and excruciating deaths which the art of ingeniously tormenting and extinguishing life ever devised. Crucifixion obtained among several ancient nations, the Egyptians, Persians, Greeks, and Carthaginians. But this manner of executing criminals prevailed most among the Romans. It was generally a servile punishment, and chiefly inflicted on vile, worthless and incorrigible slaves. In reference to this the Apostle, describing the condescension of Jesus and his submission to this most opprobrious death, represents him as taking ‘upon him the form of a servant,’ and becoming ‘obedient to death, even the death of the cross.’*

It was universally and deservedly reputed the most shameful and ignominious death to which a wretch could be exposed. In such an exit were comprised every idea and circumstance of odium, disgrace and public scandal. Hence the Apostle magnifies and extols the philosophy and greatness of mind which our blessed Lord displayed, ‘who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame,’—regarding with a generous disdain and contempt every circumstance of public indignity and infamy with which such a death was loaded. It was from the idea they connected with such a death that the Greeks treated the Apostles with the last contempt

* Phil. ii. 7, 8.

and pity, for publicly embarking in the cause of a person who had been brought to this reproachful and dishonorable death by his his own countrymen. The preaching of the cross was to them ' foolishness ;' *—the promulgation of a system of religion that had been taught by a person who by a national act had publicly suffered the punishment and death of the most useless and abandoned slave was in their ideas the last infatuation, and the preaching Christ crucified, publishing in the world a religion whose founder suffered on a cross, appeared the last absurdity and madness. The Heathens looked upon the attachment of the primitive Christians to a religion whose publisher had come to such an end as an undoubted proof of their utter ruin, that they were destroying their interest, comfort and happiness by adopting such a system founded on such a dishonorable circumstance.

The same inherent scandal and ignominy had crucifixion in the estimation of the Jews. They indeed annexed more complicated wretchedness to it, for they esteemed the miscreant who was adjudged to such an end not only to be abandoned of men but forsaken of God. ' He that is hanged,' says the law, ' is accursed of God.' † Hence St Paul representing to the Galatians the grace and benevolence of Jesus, who released us from that curse to which the law of Moses devoted us by being made a curse for us, by submitting to be treated for our sakes as an execrable malefactor, to show the horror of such a death as Christ voluntarily endured adds, ' It is written in the law, cursed is every one that is hanged

* 1 Cor. i. 23.

† Deut. xxi. 23.

on a tree !* And from this express declaration of the law of Moses concerning persons thus executed we account for that aversion the Jews discovered against Christianity, and perceive the reason of what St Paul asserts, that their preaching of Christ crucified was 'to the Jews a stumbling-block.'† The circumstance of the cross caused them to stumble at the very gate of Christianity.

The several circumstances related by the four Evangelists as accompanying the crucifixion of Jesus were conformable to the Roman custom in such executions, and frequently occurring in ancient authors do not only reflect beauty and lustre upon these passages, but happily corroborate and confirm the narrative of the sacred penmen. I will exhibit before my reader a detail of these as they are specified by the Evangelists.

When Pilate had pronounced the sentence of condemnation on our Lord and publicly adjudged him to be crucified, he gave orders that he should be scourged. 'Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged him.' 'And when he had scourged Jesus,' says another of the Evangelists, 'he delivered him to be crucified.' Among the Romans, scourging was always inflicted previously to crucifixion. After they had inflicted this customary flagellation, the Evangelists inform us that they obliged our Lord to carry to the place of execution the cross, or at least the transverse beam of it, on which he was to be suspended. Lacerated therefore with the stripes and bruises he had received—faint with the loss of blood—his spirits exhausted by the cruel insults and blows that were given

* Galat. iii. 13.

† 1 Cor. i. 23.

him when they invested him with robes of mock royalty—and oppressed with the incumbent weight of his cross—in these circumstances our Saviour was urged along the road. I doubt not but in this passage to Calvary every indignity was offered him. This was usual. Our Lord, fatigued and spent with the treatment he had received, could not support his cross. The soldiers therefore who attended him compelled one Simon a Cyrenian, who was coming from the country to Jerusalem and happened then to be passing by them, to carry it for him. This circumstance here mentioned, of our Lord bearing his cross, was agreeable to the Roman custom. Slaves and malefactors, who were condemned to this death, were compelled to carry the whole or part of the fatal gibbet on which they were destined to die. This constituted a principal part of the shame and ignominy of such a death. Cross-bearer was a term of the last reproach among the Romans.

When the malefactor had carried his cross to the place of execution, a hole was dug in the earth, in which it was to be fixed—the criminal was stripped—a stupifying potion was given him—the cross was laid on the ground—the wretch distended upon it—and four soldiers, two on each side, at the same time were employed in driving four large nails through his hands and feet. These several particulars the Romans observed in the crucifixion of our Lord. Upon his arrival at Calvary he was stripped; a stupifying draught was offered him, which he refused to drink. This St Mark says was a composition of myrrh and wine. The design of this potion was, by its inebriating and intoxicating quality to blunt the edge of pain, and stun the quickness of

sensibility. Our Lord rejected this medicated cup—offered him perhaps by the injudicious kindness of some of his friends—it being his fixed resolution to meet death in all its horrors, not to alleviate and suspend its pains by any methods of this nature, but to perfect his obedience to God by submitting to death, even this death of crucifixion with all its just and attendant circumstances. Our Lord was fastened to his cross, as was usual, by four soldiers,* two on each side, according to the respective limb they severally nailed. While those were employed in piercing his hands and his feet, it is probable, that he offered to heaven that most benevolent and affecting prayer for his murderers, in which he pleaded the only circumstance that could possibly extenuate their guilt. ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’

It was customary for the Romans on any extraordinary execution to put over the head of the malefactor an inscription, denoting the crime for which he suffered. Several examples of this occur in the Roman history. In conformity to this usage a title, or inscription, by Pilate’s order was fixed above the head of Jesus, written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, specifying what it was that had brought him to this end.

After the cross was erected, a party of soldiers was appointed to keep guard and to attend at the place of execution until the criminal breathed his last. Thus

* ‘The four soldiers who parted his garments and cast lots for his vesture were the four who raised him to the cross, each of them fixing a limb, and who it seems for this service had a right to the crucified person’s clothes.’ *Dr. Macknight.*

also we read that a body of Roman soldiers with a centurion were deputed to guard our Lord and his two fellow sufferers.

While they were thus attending them, it is said our Saviour complained of thirst. This is a natural circumstance. The exquisitely sensible and tender extremities of the body being thus perforated—the person languishing and faint with loss of blood, and lingering under such acute and excruciating torture—these causes must necessarily kindle and inflame a vehement and excessive thirst. One of the guards hearing this request hastened and took a sponge, and filled it from a vessel that stood by, that was full of vinegar. The usual drink of the Roman soldiers was vinegar and water. The knowledge of this custom illustrates this passage of sacred history. I thought it not improper to remark this, because the question has been often asked, For what purpose was this vessel of vinegar. After receiving this Jesus cried with a loud voice, and rapturously uttered with all the vehemence he could exert that comprehensive word, on which a volume might be written, ‘It is finished;’ the divine plan and scheme of human redemption is finished: after which his head sunk upon his bosom, and he expired.

The last circumstance I shall mention relative to the crucifixion of Jesus, was the petition of the Jews to Pilate that the death of the sufferers might be accelerated. There is an express prohibition in the law,* that the bodies of those who were hanged should not be suffered to remain all night upon the tree. The next day

* Deut. xxi. 23.

therefore after the crucifixion being, as one of the Evangelists says,* a high day, a number of leading men among the Jews waited on Pilate in a body to desire that he would hasten the death of the malefactors hanging on their crosses. Pilate therefore dispatched his orders to the soldiers on duty, who broke the legs of the two criminals who were crucified along with Christ; but when they came to Jesus, finding he had already breathed his last, they thought this violence and trouble unnecessary; but one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, whose point appears to have penetrated into the pericardium of the heart, for St John, who says he was an eye witness of this, declares that there issued from the wound a mixture of blood and water. This wound, had he not been dead, must necessarily have been fatal. This circumstance St John saw, and hath solemnly recorded and attested it from a conviction of the great importance of this event, and conscious that on this single fact, the death of Jesus, rests the whole fabric and system of the Christian religion.'

TRANSLATION AND EXPOSITION.

MATTHEW vi. 19—34.

Part of the Sermon on the Mount.

- 19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth,
where moth and rust destroy and where thieves

* John xix. 31.

20 break through and steal ; but lay up for yourselves
treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust
destroys and where thieves do not break through
21 nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will
22 also your heart be. The eye is the light of the
body. Therefore if thine eye be sound, thy whole
23 body will be enlightened ; but if thine eye be dis-
eased, thy whole body will be in darkness. If
then the light that is in thee is darkness, how great
24 is the darkness. No one can serve two masters ;
for he will either hate one and love the other, or
will pay regard to one and neglect the other. You
cannot serve God and Mammon.

25 For this reason I say to you, Be not anxious
about your life, what you shall eat and what you
shall drink, nor about your body, how you shall
26 be clothed. Is not life more than food, and the
body than clothing ? Observe the birds of heaven,
that they neither sow nor reap nor gather into
granaries, but your heavenly Father feeds them.
27 Do not you much exceed them in value ? But
who of you by his anxiety can add one cubit to
28 his age ? And why are you anxious about cloth-
ing ? Mark the lilies of the field, how they grow ;
29 they neither labor nor spin ; yet I say to you, that
Solomon in all his splendor was not clothed like
30 one of these. But if God so clothes the plants
of the field, which to day are and tomorrow are
cast into the oven, will he not much more clothe
31 you, ye weak in faith ? Therefore be not anxious,

saying, What shall we eat or what shall we drink,
32 or with what shall we be clothed. For all these things the Heathens earnestly seek. Your heavenly Father also knows that you need all these
33 things. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things besides will
34 be given you. Be not therefore anxious about the morrow; for the morrow will take care of its own concerns. Sufficient for the day is its trouble.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

The whole of this section relates to one general subject, solicitude about this life and its circumstances. In the first paragraph (vs. 19—24) Jesus condemns that desire of wealth which has always been one of the great preventives of excellence, and of the lamentable effects of which Jerusalem and Judea were then full. In the subsequent verses (25—34) he cautions his disciples against a troublesome and distrustful solicitude respecting the means of support, the comforts or even the necessities of life. It should be remembered that in delivering these injunctions our Lord had in view the situation of his Apostles and other early believers, who devoting themselves to the office of evangelists, teachers of the gospel, would need to place an entire trust in Providence, since they would not only be withdrawn from their usual pursuits but be exposed to peculiar exigencies. Still the spirit of these precepts, the spirit of reliance on the care and goodness of God, the spirit moreover of contentment with a moderate portion of this world's blessings, should be cherished by every Christian at every period.

Few passages of Scripture have suffered more from mistranslation than the last ten verses of this section. The

original word which I have rendered *anxious* expresses solicitous care—more than mere attention—anxiety of mind affecting the conduct. In the common version it is rendered *take no thought*, as if our Lord were inculcating absolute thoughtlessness about the means of bodily subsistence and comfort, an indifference and negligence which the precepts and example of Paul show us were not commendable even in the miraculous age of the church. Such an erroneous construction of these commands has on the one hand caused distress to many conscientious Christians, and on the other has given to infidels an occasion of sneer at Christianity.

V. 19. It was a common form of speech among the Jews, of which many examples are found in the New Testament, to represent preference by combining a negative and a positive assertion in the same sentence, meaning only to give the idea of relative or comparative and not of absolute value. See Matt. ix. 13 (compare Hosea vi. 6.) John vi. 26, 27; Acts v. 4. Jesus therefore does not forbid the acquisition of property, but the resting of our desires and affections upon it as the chief good.

The *treasures* of the East consisted of the produce of the fields (Luke xii. 16—21,) precious metals, and raiment (James v. 2, 3; Job xxvii. 16.) As the fashion of dress did not change among the Orientals as with us, they collected large quantities of clothing, which retained their value for years and were transmitted from one generation to another. Hence we see the propriety of mentioning the *moth*, which consumes garments.

Rust. The proper rendering of this word is not clearly settled. Wakefield translates it *worm*; but the common interpretation supposes it to mean that canker, or corrosive substance, which encrusts precious vessels after long disuse.

V. 20. The *treasures in heaven* are the peace, joy and eternal life which await the good hereafter. Compare

Matt. xix. 21 and Luke xviii. 22, Luke xii. 33, 1 Tim. vi. 17—19.

V. 21. *Where your treasure is, there will also your heart be.* See Luke xii. 34. Whatever we esteem our chief treasure, or most valuable, will captivate our desires and affections.

Vs. 22. 23. The connexion between these verses and those which precede and follow is very close, though it may not be at once apparent. Jesus is speaking of that which should be regarded as the chief good, and having signified what this is and what it is not, he now reminds his disciples of the importance of forming a correct judgment on this subject, since the understanding which forms this judgment is to the inward man, the soul, what the eye is to the body. If the eye discern objects clearly and justly, all the motions of the body may be correct; but if the organ of vision be diseased, partially or totally blinded, all the movements of the body will be irregular and uncertain. So if the understanding judge correctly of those things which are objects of its vision, the exercises of the whole soul,—mind, heart, will, may be right; but if the inward eye see things in false shapes or relations, all the exercises of the soul,—the perceptions, desires, affections will be involved in error, in darkness. What a lamentable state is this. How deep and wide the gloom which results from a wrong judgment.—The same comparison is quoted from Aristotle, Galen, and Philo; ‘As the eye in the body, so is the understanding in the soul.’ See Luke xi. 34—36.

V. 24. Christ had spoken of the importance of a sound judgment respecting the chief object of desire or pursuit. He now notices the fact that the mind must have a *single* chief object of regard. It will have a ‘ruling passion.’ The love of God or the love of the world will predominate, and the one control the other. This truth he illustrates by the example of a servant, or slave, who cannot divide his

service equally between two masters whose wishes and commands will often be contradictory. He will love one more than the other, or at least will give more prompt obedience to the directions of one than to those of the other. We have here another example of the Hebraism mentioned in the note on the 19th and 20th verses.

Mammon. This is a word of Syriac origin, and is said to have been the name of a deity who was regarded as the god of wealth, the Plutus of the Greek and Roman mythology. It here signifies wealth. The thirst for riches or worldly possessions as the supreme good is at direct variance with the supreme love of God. They cannot co-exist in the mind. See 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. The word *mammon* is used in three other places in the N. T., viz. Luke xvi. 9, 11, 13, from the last of which it appears that the sentiment and illustration adopted by our Lord at this time were repeated by him on another occasion.

Vs. 25—33. See second paragraph under Explanatory Notes, page 138. The parallel passage will be found in Luke xii. 22—31.

V. 25. *For this reason*, i. e. on account of the inconsistency of piety with supreme regard for the things of this life. Jesus dissuades his disciples from the indulgence of anxiety about their temporal condition by a variety of arguments, all of them plain but forcible. The first is drawn from the opposite nature of a worldly and a devout temper, the former of which anxiety about the circumstances of the present life is suited to generate. The second argument for trust in Providence is past experience of the divine goodness. *Life is more*, i. e. is more valuable, is a greater gift, *than food, and the body a greater gift than clothing*. If then God has bestowed on us the greater, how much more will he give the less—whatever is necessary for the support and comfort of our animal life. Compare Phil. iv. 6, 1 Pet. v. 7.

V. 26. The next argument against anxiety is taken

from God's care of the lower orders of creation. The birds are nourished from his bounty ; how much more shall the wants of man be supplied from the same source. It should be remarked that our Lord does not recommend indolence by the example of the birds, but a reliance on the protection and goodness of our heavenly Father, who as he neglects not the least will not overlook any of his creatures.

The birds of heaven. This mode of expression—adding the place of abode to the name of the species, was common with the Jews. See Gen. i. 26, Psalm viii. 8, civ. 12.

V. 27. *Who of you by his anxiety can add one cubit to his age ?* A fourth argument is the fruitlessness of anxiety. All our solicitude is impotent. The sense of the passage requires that the original should be translated *age*, rather than 'stature.' It has the latter meaning in Luke xix. 3, and will bear either in Luke ii. 52. In John ix. 21, & 23, it signifies mature age, manhood or middle life ; this also seems to be its meaning in Ephes. iv. 13, and in Heb. xi. 11. These with the passage before us and the parallel verse in Luke xii. 25 are the only examples of its use in the N. T. The meaning of our Lord's question is,—whose anxiety can effect the least thing ; as is proved by Luke xii. 26. Now the increase of one's height by a cubit is a great addition ; it would have been more pertinent to ask, who can add a handbreadth (Psalm xxxix. 5.) to his stature. But the addition of a cubit to one's age, or life, expresses just the idea which is wanted in this place. We apply the measures of space to time. We speak of a long or a short life. If then the inquiry be, who can lengthen life even by a cubit, the question is pertinent and forcible.—The cubit is commonly reckoned as a foot and a half.

V. 28. Jesus had in verse 26 quoted the care which divine Providence took of the birds as a reason for man's reposing trust in the same Providence for the support of human life. He now in like manner draws from the vegeta-

ble world an argument for serenity of mind in respect to apparel. *The lilies of the field* grew without cultivation in Palestine, and many of them may at this time have been within sight from the hill on which Jesus was seated. It was not our lily however to which he directed the thoughts if not the eyes of his hearers, but (as is generally supposed) what we call the crown imperial, remarkable for its large red flower. We see then the exact propriety of the allusion, as the robes of royalty were of a purple color. Solomon in all the magnificence of his regal dress was not so richly adorned as were these wild flowers.

They neither labor nor spin. The former expression refers to the employments of men, the latter to those of women.

V. 30. *If God so clothes.* The subjunctive mode ought not to be used here, as no idea of contingency or futurity is meant to be expressed, but on the contrary the idea of a certain, present fact.

The plants of the field. The original word, which the translators of the common version rendered grass, means herbage of any kind.

Tomorrow are cast into the oven. The scarcity of fuel in the East obliges the inhabitants to burn the dried stalks of plants, and other substances. The Psalmist alludes to the brief life and rapid decay of the flower, Psalm xc. 6. ciii. 15, 16.

Ye weak in faith. For a notice of the variety of meanings which the word *faith* has in the Bible, See Script. Interp. vol. 1. p. 207. One of the meanings there given is, 'confidence, religious trust,' which is its sense here.

V. 32. *The Heathens earnestly seek.* Another argument for preserving the mind from a slavish anxiety about the circumstances of this life;—that they were the objects of chief regard with the Heathen world. A similar comparison between Pagans and worshippers of the true God oc-

curs (according to the correct text) in Matt. v. 47; see page 40 of this volume, where I should now prefer the word *Heathens* to 'Gentiles.'

Your heavenly Father also knows that you need all these things. Still another reason for cherishing a spirit of trust rather than of solicitude. God knows our wants; he is our Father; may we not then confide in his care and love? See the 8th verse of this chapter.

V. 33. *The kingdom of God and his righteousness*; i. e. the religion which God reveals by his Son and the goodness which he requires; or in other words, seek to know and do the will of God. 'The righteousness of God' is the righteousness which he enjoins, as in Psalm li. 17 'the sacrifices of God' are the sacrifices which he accepts. The same use of the possessive case occurs in Rom. i. 17 & x. 3. We learn the nature of this righteousness from Matt. v. 20 and what follows.

All these things besides will be given you. Make God the supreme object of regard, trust in him and keep his commandments, and he will provide for your support and comfort. Compare Psalm xxxvii. 25, lv. 22, Mark x. 29, 30, 1 Tim. iv. 8. A man whose piety leads him both to rest on God and to obey Him seldom fails to obtain all that is necessary for the comfort and happiness of life.

V. 34. *The morrow*, i. e. the future generally.

Will take care of its own affairs. Literally, will be anxious for the things of itself. The sentiment of this verse is nearly the same as that of the last; or it may be taken as the summing up, the conclusion, of all which has preceded. Do your duty to-day and with the wants and troubles of to-morrow you will also find sources of relief and supply.

Sufficient for the day is its trouble. One more argument against anxiety. Every day has trouble enough of its own without borrowing trouble from the future by anticipation and distrust.

PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. Devotion to wealth is not less inconsistent with the christian character, with a just hope of heaven or a pure love of God, now than it was in the days of the Apostles. We are permitted to pursue our usual avocations, and by an upright industry may accumulate property ; but if we set our hearts upon it, they will be estranged from God. He must be the object of our supreme affection, desire, confidence and hope.

2. Every one should endeavor to form a correct estimate of life, its purpose and its chief good. It is a familiar remark, that most men mistake the nature and source of happiness. The ground of mistake is negligence in forming a judgment on the different objects of attraction or pursuit. Whatever we esteem the greatest treasure in possession or in prospect, will be the resting-place of our hearts. How false, and frail, and brief a resting-place do most hearts find !

3. Trust in God is the Christian's duty and privilege ; filial reliance on the power and goodness of his heavenly Father. Such a trust gives tranquillity and strength to the mind, and enables it to bring all its powers to act with freedom and vigor on the duties of the present hour ; while anxiety distracts and weakens it, preventing the enjoyment of the present without making any useful preparation for the future.

4. Observe how many and strong reasons our Lord gives for putting our trust in Providence. The irreconcilable nature of worldly solicitude and christian piety, the past goodness of God, the care which he takes of he lower animals, the beauty with which he clothes the

spontaneous productions of nature, the unprofitableness of anxiety, the infinite perfections and paternal character of the Supreme Being, the tendency of a cheerful confidence in the divine love to promote our present happiness as well as to secure God's blessing, the universal and ceaseless exercise of his Providence, the amount of trouble which belongs to every day—all these considerations are urged as inducements to cast our care upon Him who careth for us. They certainly compose a conclusive argument.

5. What must we think of that Being whose care sustains the least of the productions of his power, while it embraces the interests of the universe. The birds are fed, the flowers are adorned by divine goodness. Nothing escapes the notice of our heavenly Father, who, independent and glorious as he is, condescends to watch over his creatures and to bless every living thing. What is Providence, but a mirror from which infinite love is reflected upon every object in the creation? Children may and should be taught piety through observation of the common processes of existence. Every spot is full of lessons which the young mind can understand, and the innocent heart will love to receive.

6. Be it our desire and aim to do the will of God, that we may be subjects of that kingdom which is emphatically styled His, and partakers of the righteousness which he requires and approves. While we make this the unchanging, unchangeable object to which our hearts look and our efforts tend, we may rest in the confidence of faith, that whatever shall be needful for our support or our success will be given us by Him who knows and can relieve all our wants.

TRANSLATION AND EXPOSITION.

MATTHEW VII.

Conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount.

- 1 Judge not, that you be not judged. For as you
2 judge you will be judged, and the measure which
3 you give will be given you. But why dost thou
observe the splinter in thy brother's eye but dost not
4 regard the beam in thine own eye? Or how canst
thou say to thy brother, Let me take the splinter
out of thine eye, and lo! a beam in thine own eye.
5 Hypocrite, first take the beam out of thine own eye,
and then thou wilt see clearly to take the splinter
out of thy brother's eye.
- 6 Give not that which is holy to dogs, neither cast
your pearls before swine, lest they trample them un-
der their feet, and turning tear you.
- 7 Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will
8 find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For
every one who asks receives, and he who seeks
9 finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Is
there a man among you, who if his son ask bread
10 of him will give him a stone, or if he ask a fish
11 will give him a serpent? If then you who are sin-
ful know how to give good gifts to your children, how
much more will your Father who is in heaven give
good things to them who ask him.
- 12 Moreover in all things whatever you would that
men should do to you, do you so to them; for this
is the law and the prophets.

13 Enter through the strait gate. For wide is the
gate and broad the way which leads to destruction,
14 and many are they who enter through it. How
strait is the gate and narrow the way which leads to
life, and few are they who find it.

15 Beware of false teachers, who come to you in
sheeps' clothing but within are ravenous wolves.
16 You shall know them by their fruits. Do men
gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles?
17 So every good tree produces good fruit, but a bad
18 tree produces bad fruit. A good tree cannot pro-
19 duce bad fruit, nor a bad tree good fruit. Every
tree that does not produce good fruit is cut down
20 and cast into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you
shall know them.

21 Not whoever says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter
into the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the
22 will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will
say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not
taught in thy name, and in thy name cast out de-
23 mons, and in thy name done many miracles? And
then I will declare to them, I never knew you; de-
part from me, you who work iniquity.

24 Whoever therefore hears these words of mine
and obeys them, I will compare him to a wise man,
25 who built his house on the rock. And the rain
fell and the streams came and the winds blew and
beat against that house, but it fell not; for its foun-
26 dation had been laid on the rock. And every
one who hears these words of mine and does not

obey them shall be compared to a foolish man, who
 27 built his house on the sand. And the rain fell and
 the streams came and the winds blew and beat
 against that house, and it fell; and great was its
 ruin.

28 And it came to pass, that when Jesus had con-
 cluded these words the multitudes were astonished
 29 at his teaching. For he taught them as having au-
 thority, and not as the Scribes.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

In this last part of his admirable discourse, as it is pre-
 served by his Apostle Matthew, our Lord gives a variety of
 useful instruction, especially pertinent to the circumstances
 of his first disciples, but suited in its spirit to the character
 of every age. In respect even to their original application
 the remark is a sound one, 'None of the expressions are
 to be interpreted too literally.' 'But,' adds the writer*
 from whom this remark is quoted, 'their effect is greater
 than that of any literal expression. Christ shows in the
 clearest manner what *dispositions* we should cultivate.' As
 Jesus did not hesitate to draw illustrations from the works
 of nature, nor to introduce familiar petitions into the prayer
 which he taught his disciples, so we find him here quoting
 proverbial forms of speech, availing himself of every means
 by which, without compromising its divine excellence, he
 might recommend his instruction or fix it in the minds of
 his hearers.

Vs. 1—5. Compare Luke vi. 37, 38, 41, 42.

* Dr Priestley—Notes on Scripture.

V. 1. *Judge not.* Here we perceive occasion for the rule, not to interpret the expression *too literally*; for Jesus did not point his prohibition against that exercise of judicial authority with which rests the preservation of individual rights and of the social state, nor did he mean to forbid what we cannot avoid, the forming of an opinion respecting the characters of others, as is clear from verses 6, 15—20. All which he intended was, to rebuke and anticipate a censorious temper which is eager to discover and proclaim faults, and which being directed not by a desire of benefiting others but by its own malignity would be highly indecorous in the teachers of his religion, who while they sought to reform their fellow-men should be patterns of kindness and humility.—The Pharisees were notorious for this sin.

V. 2. *The measure which you give will be given you.* A proverbial expression. See its use in a different application, Mark iv. 24. It contains an argument addressed to their desire of reputation and favor among men; they who are severe in their judgment of others will be measured by their own rule. It also addresses their fears; God will be strict in his judgment of such persons. See James ii. 13; also Matt. vi. 15.

V. 3. *The splinter—the beam.* Another proverbial form of expression, of which examples are found in the Rabbinical writings. *Splinter* is the true meaning of the original rather than ‘mote,’ the word used in our Bibles, and is better suited for the purpose of contrast with *beam*.

V. 4. *How canst thou say.* With what propriety, or as we sometimes say, with what face.—*Brother* here means, as often in the New Testament, fellow-man.

V. 5. *Hypocrite*; because he pretends to be offended by faults of character, when he himself labors under more than they whom he reproves.

The meaning of the whole paragraph is, Be candid. Remember that gratuitous or harsh censure will expose you

to requital. Consider too that he who blames others should take care lest his own character be more faulty than theirs, and he must not expect that they will patiently endure rebuke from one whose conduct mocks his pretensions of superior excellence. He who condemns the vices of others should himself be blameless, also because personal goodness is the only security of correct judgment. A bad man may censure, but he will not judge fairly.—These counsels deserved the especial regard of the disciples, whose lives were to be spent in preaching repentance and holiness.

V. 6. *Dogs* and *Swine* were epithets descriptive of different classes of men whom the Apostles would meet in their ministry. Some would resent interference with their modes of life and would be disposed to treat with violence the teachers of the new religion, while others were so gross and bestial in their tastes that they would reject with coarse disdain the treasures of sacred truth which were offered them. It would be a waste of time and labor to press instruction upon such. The preachers of the gospel should rather seek those who would listen and be converted. In other words, they should exercise discrimination in their ministry and distribute their labors according to the prospect of success.—All the terms used in this verse were familiar to the Jews in the figurative sense which they here bear. Swine and dogs were among the unclean animals, forbidden for food by the Mosaic law. In what estimation the dog was held may be learned from such passages as 1 Sam. xvii. 43, xxiv. 14, 2 Sam. xvi. 9. Observe the use of the word to describe character in Phil. iii. 2, Rev. xxii. 15; also 2 Pet. ii. 22.—By *that which is holy* commentators understand the sacrifice.—Any one who has read the book of Proverbs knows how often wisdom is compared to rubies, or pearls, as the word should be translated; as Prov. iii. 15; see also Job xxviii. 18.—Counsel similar to that given here may be found in Prov. ix. 7, 8. and xxiii. 9.—The

parts of this verse correspond to each other in a manner which is not apparent on a slight reading ; the swine would trample the pearls under their feet, and the dogs would turn on him who brought to them that which was holy and bite or tear him.

Vs. 7—11. Compare Luke xi. 9—13 ; also Matt. xxi. 22 and Mark xi. 24, John xvi. 23, 24, James i. 5, 1 John iii. 22. These promises doubtless had a fuller application to the first preachers of the gospel, who were favored with miraculous gifts and supernatural communications, than they can have to us. Even with them the general duties of prayer, faith, and reliance on God were inculcated, rather than the expectation of immediate and universal answer of their petitions. We are taught to look to God for whatever we need, and to believe that he will grant us what it is best that we should receive, especially those spiritual influences which we should seek with most importunity.

V. 7. *Ask, seek, knock, &c.* Different modes of expressing the same general idea, though with an increase of strength or earnestness in the successive terms.

Vs. 9—11. Jesus argues from the affection of a human parent and its results to what we may expect from the infinite love of our heavenly Father. It is a forcible and beautiful mode of reasoning.

V. 10. The expressions in this verse were common. On another occasion it appears that Jesus added to them a third illustration ; ‘if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion.’ Luke xi. 12.

V. 11. *You who are sinful.* The word is used in a popular or loose sense. The imperfection of man is contrasted with the perfection of God.

Good things, or good gifts, as it might be rendered, supposing the noun which is expressed in the former part of the verse to be understood after the adjective in this clause. In Luke we read, ‘how much more shall your heavenly

Father give *the holy spirit*.' The difference of language in the two evangelists is more in appearance than in reality, for spiritual blessings are those which should be chiefly sought, and are the best things that God can give us.

V. 12. A general precept, to be explained and controlled by such restrictions as common sense must show to be proper. It does not mean that our own wishes however wrong or unreasonable should be our guide in the treatment of others, but that whatever we might justly adopt for the measure of our own desires we should make the rule of our conduct towards them. The precept, subject to such qualification, is of universal force. *In all things*, i. e. always, every where, to every person, under all circumstances, show that temper and behavior which you would be justified in wishing to receive if you were similarly situated. Compare Luke vi. 31.

This is the law and the prophets; i. e. this is the great end, the substance of ancient divine instruction. Yet we must not take the expression 'too literally,' as if the Old Testament inculcated only social virtue, since we know that it insisted on love to God not less than on love to man. See Matt. xxii. 37—40. So closely however are the parts of duty connected, that it may be said that no one could be faithful in his social relations who neglected the culture of piety.—Language like that of our Lord was used by Paul, Rom. xiii. 8, 10, Galat. v. 14, 1 Tim. i. 5. We find in the apocryphal book of Tobit the charge, (iv. 15,) 'Do that to no man which thou hatest'; and in the Talmud a story is told of a Pagan who came to one of the Rabbins and offered to become a proselyte, if he would repeat to him the whole law while he stood on one foot; the Rabbi took him at his word and made him a proselyte by saying, 'Do not to another what is hateful to thyself; this is the whole law, the rest is but its explanation.'

V. 13. *Enter through the strait gate*. This was, and is still,

a common figure.—Compare Luke xiii. 24.—The instruction conveyed in this passage (vs. 13, 14) is, that obedience to the divine will should be chosen however difficult it may be, whatever circumspection, self-denial and labor it may impose. In the time of the Apostles the divine will called them to the profession and support of the christian faith; which subjected them to many trials, in a word, to a life of sacrifice and toil. Comparatively few would enter on such a path, or in plain terms, would adopt such a life. But the great majority, who preferred the indulgence of their passions and listened to the calls of earthly temptation, would only pursue their way to ruin and discover at last that they had mistaken their true interest. The followers of Jesus would enjoy eternal happiness, while those who rejected the gospel would realize the consequences of their folly. Such was the original force of these expressions; and they still remind us that christian obedience requires self-denial and effort, and that few out of the great mass either of mankind or of the christian world like to walk where no more room is given to follow the bent of their own inclinations, and they point out to us the different results to which this diversity of choice will lead. But nothing is said here really inconsistent with the declaration of Jesus, ‘My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.’

V. 14. *How strait is the gate.* The authority of manuscripts and versions is so decidedly in favor of a reading which requires this translation instead of that in the common version, ‘because,’ that it must be taken as the correct text.

V. 15. *Beware of false teachers.* See note on the word teachers in Script. Interp. vol. 1. p. 151; also the second note on page 229 of same volume.

Sheeps’ clothing. It has been thought that Jesus here alluded to the dress of the old prophets, who it is said wore garments made of skins; see Heb. xi. 37. But it is more

probable that he used the expression entirely in a figurative sense, as descriptive of those who affected an innocence of manner which was meant to blind men to their real character. Such teachers arose in the church, as we learn from the words of the Apostles, who describe their hypocrisy in strong terms; see Acts xx. 29, Rom. xvi. 18, 2 Pet. ii. 1, 3, 1 John iv. 1. Our Lord foretold the appearance of a particular class of these teachers during the troubles which preceded the fall of Jerusalem, men who assumed the character of the Messiah and under the pretence of friendship for the people or of personal sanctity concealed the blackest selfishness, Matt. xxiv. 11, 24. In the present passage however he may have signified rather those who should profess to teach in his name, of whom he speaks more plainly in the next paragraph.—As the sheep is a common emblem of gentleness or innocence, so is the wolf of cruelty or selfishness.

V. 16. *You shall know them by their fruits.* Observe them carefully, and they will betray their character by their conduct. Their life will contradict their pretensions.

Vs. 16—20. Compare Luke vi. 43—45, Matt. xii. 33; also James iii. 12. The meaning of the illustration is too plain to need any comment.

V. 17. *A bad tree*; or, as we might say, a tree of a bad sort, from which we never expect good fruit.

V. 19. *Every tree that does not produce good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire.* This verse appears so parenthetical in this place, interrupting rather than carrying on the sentiment of the passage, that the conjecture has been started that it was taken from Matthew iii. 10 by some transcriber who first wrote it in the margin, whence it crept into the text. But no existing manuscript affords the slightest ground for such a supposition.—Our Lord's words, John xv. 6, may explain the verse. The insincere teacher will

be discovered and rejected by men and will receive the punishment due to his hypocrisy.

V. 21. Compare Luke vi. 46; also James i. 22.

Not whoever says. By an idiom of which the New Testament furnishes several examples, the adjective which expresses universality together with the negative particle signifies a universal negation; see Mark xiii. 20, where the Greek is literally 'not all flesh'; 1 John ii. 21, Greek—'every lie is not of the truth.' Yet as I am not satisfied that this rule is invariable, I have preferred a translation of the verse that certainly gives the meaning, rather than to render the words, 'no one who says,' or with Wakefield, 'no man for saying.'

Lord, Lord; or Master, Master.

The kingdom of heaven. This phrase, as was remarked in the note on Matt. iii. 2, means in general the Christian religion—its appearance in the world, its influences, its blessings, its promises, and its results in a future life. While this is the general idea, or collection of ideas, of which it is the sign, its exact meaning in particular passages must be determined by the connexion. In this passage the whole form of expression is figurative, and the meaning is, that profession of faith in Jesus as a divine teacher would not entitle one to be considered or rewarded as a disciple, for obedience was the only means of securing the blessings conveyed and promised by the gospel.

Vs. 22, 23. Compare Luke xiii. 25—27.

V. 22. *In that day.* See the same expression used in a similar manner in Luke x. 12, (compare v. 14 and Matt. xi. 22, 24), 2 Tim. i. 12, 18, iv. 8. It evidently means the day of judgment, of righteous retribution, though without indicating any circumstance of time or place.—We know that some persons did in the first age profess Christianity insincerely, and that miraculous gifts were not only falsely arrogated (Acts xix. 13), but were possessed by those who proved themselves unworthy of the trust (1 Cor. xii—xiv).

V. 23. *I never knew you*, i. e. as my disciples; or I never regarded you with favor. Such is the meaning of the word in other places, as 1 Cor. viii. 3, 2 Tim. ii. 19, Psalm i. 6; compare Matt. xxv. 12.

Depart from me. Compare Matt. xxv. 41. The whole description in these two verses is dramatic, and was meant in this way to express with more force the truth, that acknowledgment of Jesus as Master, under whatever circumstances, if it were not attended with obedience to the instructions which he brought from his Father, would not secure his favor nor a participation in the happiness which his true disciples would inherit.

Vs. 24—27. Compare Luke vi. 47—49. These verses, while they naturally follow the paragraph which immediately precedes them, form an appropriate conclusion to the whole discourse. In this fine comparison Jesus taught his disciples then and now that obedience was the only sure basis of safety or hope, for he who rested on the name of a Christian would realize disappointment, shame and ruin. To perceive the beauty of the illustration we must remember the soil and climate of Judea. Much of the land was hilly and rocky, covered with a slight coat of earth, which was liable to be washed off by the torrents that swollen by the periodical rains rushed down the hills with destructive violence. The rains of Palestine, recurring at regular intervals, continued for several days. Storms of wind often preceded them.

V. 24. *A wise man.* 'Prudent' would perhaps be a more exact rendering. The prudent man would remove the soil which might be swept away, and thus his house be undermined, and lay his foundation on the solid rock.

V. 27. *Great was its ruin*; or complete, as we should say.

V. 28. *It came to pass.* These words are redundant, but as they have exactly the force of the original, I retain them because they mark the style of the writer.

Were astonished. This word hardly expresses the force of the Greek, which denotes a strong affection of the mind.

His teaching ; i. e. both the substance and the manner.—The surprise and admiration of the people at our Lord's teaching is frequently mentioned in the Gospels ; see Matt. xxii. 33, Mark i. 22, xi. 18, Luke iv. 32. His instructions were different in character from those of the Pharisees, and were delivered with a consciousness of their truth and of his own inspiration which corresponded with nothing that they had seen in their Rabbins or Scribes.

PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. This chapter contains many subjects which may be made topics of instruction at the Sunday school, or may engage our private meditations and conduce to our personal improvement. Several distinct duties are noticed ; the obedience which embraces every branch of duty is presented in that character of paramount importance in which we ought to regard it ; the manner of Christ's teaching is farther illustrated ; and the whole sermon on the Mount is brought to a clear and impressive close.

2. Censoriousness is a vice which has nothing to recommend it, while both its character and its effect on him in whom it appears and on those who fall under its severity should dissuade us from its indulgence. The fault-finder renders little service to others, and in no way benefits himself. He will probably be unjust in his opinion or harsh in the expression of it, for his own mind is not in a right state. He will draw on himself a scrutiny which he might be glad to escape, and find too late that he has exposed his own frailties without assisting or inducing others to amend theirs.

He may in the end have lost his time, have lost his temper and have lost his character, and have neither gained nor done any good.

3. The teacher of religion, whether in a public or a private station, in the family or in the world, should exercise at once humility and prudence, always watching over himself that his life may not contradict his teaching, but in his intercourse with others considering their characters, that he may adapt and apportion his labors with good judgment, and be able to render the best possible account of the talents entrusted to him.

4. Pray. Parent and child, the teacher and the taught, let them all 'continue in prayer.' It is the duty and privilege of man. The command is clear, the promise annexed is broad and sure, the encouragement could not be greater. It is our Father to whom we pray, our heavenly Father; how ungrateful and unreasonable is it to distrust such a Parent.

5. 'The golden rule' did not originate with Jesus. It was written on the human heart by the Creator. But men had almost effaced the writing, and a teacher was needed to present it to the bodily sense, that so it might anew come under their notice, and obtain their regard. It is indeed a golden rule, for it will solve every question of social morality and yet is so simple that a child can comprehend and use it. As you would that men should do to you, do you so to them; for this is the law and the gospel, the instruction of the Old and of the New Testament.

6. The way to heaven is short, and few walk in it. But what then? Shall we follow a multitude to do evil, or shall we follow Jesus to eternal life? Choose the

right path at once, enter and press on. The toil and sacrifice which obedience demands are a small price to pay for an immortal hope. Thank God that the Christian must deny himself; for self-denial is improvement and victory.

7. The tree is known by its fruit. A name, a profession, does not make a Christian. Does a man exhibit 'the fruits of righteousness?' By this test he must be examined. The heart will betray itself through the life. We must however examine ourselves as well as others by this test. Unless our lives show that we are disciples of him whom we call Lord, however lofty may have been our pretensions, we shall be disowned by Jesus. The sincere and thorough can alone dwell with him.

8. Words could not more plainly teach that enjoyment of the means of religion will not justify the indulgence of religious hope. If it was important in the time of our Lord that his disciples should be cautioned against mistaking attendance on his instructions for that manifestation of their influence on the heart and life which could alone entitle them to the blessings of which he discoursed, it is yet more necessary to prevent such a notion in this age, when from the force of education and a sense of character men are disposed to use christian privileges and to be frequent 'hearers of the word.' To hear is well; we should be grateful for the opportunity of instruction and eager to listen. But if our religion end here, if when we leave the church or close our Bibles we consider our duty as Christians suspended till we resume the place of pupils at the feet of Jesus, we shall build our hope of heaven on the sand.

ON TRANSLATION OF SCRIPTURE.

Some persons dread any attempt to amend the common version of the Bible. Others, who acknowledge the propriety of a new translation, dislike any departure from the old which is not required by palpable error. They wish that a new version should be 'conformed as nearly as possible' (a loose, though a common, expression) to the text of our present English Bible. They lay this down indeed as a rule by which the translator should hold himself bound. I differ from them in this opinion, and I think that not much need be said to show its unsoundness.

There are two grounds on which this privilege of controlling all subsequent translations can be claimed for the version now in use. These are intrinsic merit and the value of those associations which long use has connected with its language. In regard to its merit, supposing that not only its general excellence but its superiority to all other versions were allowed, it still must be admitted to have defects; and these defects ought not to be copied. Any one whose attachment is not blind partiality will confess that it is a very faulty translation. Few verses can be selected which express the meaning of the original as exactly as it might be conveyed in the terms of our language. There is much false translation, much inadequate translation, much obscure translation, and much obsolete translation. That no one who will attentively read and practise what he reads can fall into dangerous error, I freely and gladly confess. That King James's translators were generally

successful in uniting simplicity with richness of expression, and thus securing in their version qualities of great though not of the first importance, I also acknowledge. But I cannot perceive in their character, their situation, or their work any reason for making their judgment or taste the standard to which all subsequent attempts at improvement 'should be conformed.' They were not inspired men, they did not enjoy such a variety and affluence of means as are now put within the reach of the translator, the result of their labors betrays marks of ignorance or carelessness or subserviency to interests which they should have forgotten while they were engaged in such an undertaking. Their merits therefore do not seem to me to entitle them to any peculiar deference.

Something certainly is due to the associations by which the language of this volume is consecrated. They uphold our religious feelings, and should not be rudely shaken. Still dear and valuable as they may be, they must not be preferred to a reverence for truth; which forbids us to repeat as the language or sentiments of another what it is doubtful whether he ever spoke or wrote. In other words, our desire to obtain an accurate translation should outweigh our attachment to particular forms of expression. And though we may feel some disturbance or regret at dropping what time has made both familiar and sacred, yet our piety and faith and love of the Scriptures we may hope are not so weak that a change of phraseology will endanger their existence. Besides, we should think of others in this case even more than of ourselves. The associations which we have formed with the present version, the next genera-

tion and those which succeed it will connect with whatever version they shall use. Is it not better that they should receive the Bible as free as possible from the errors with which copyists and translators have marred it than that they should be in precisely our situation—clinging, partly through love and partly through fear, to a work notoriously imperfect?

It is said indeed that by impairing the confidence of readers in the present version we may destroy their reverence for the Scriptures, and even encourage scepticism. This remark stands in the way of any emendation of the common text, and if it be heeded, our present Bibles must remain untouched by the hand of correction forever. But it is too late to make such an argument. The truth has been told, the people have heard it, and whether it is for their benefit or their injury they cannot forget, and if the friends of religion should mistake silence for prudence its enemies will not let them forget, that the version in common use is not an exact representation of the genuine originals of the Old and New Testament. The confidence of readers in the verbal accuracy of the English Bible is shaken, and all which we can do is just what we should rejoice in the opportunity of doing, first convince the people that Christian faith has a firmer basis than the verbal accuracy of a translation, and then endeavor to give them a version more nearly perfect. I beg leave to repeat, that there is no resting-place between an entire confidence in the letter of a received version and a willingness to subject that version to a thorough revisal. We must either adopt the whole error or be willing to know the whole truth.

If there be no reason why our present version should be taken as the basis of a new translation, the principle which in every other instance should govern a translator may have its full influence here. This principle is, that he should give what he believes to be the sense of the writer on whom he is employed. In rendering the Scriptures into the vernacular tongue this rule should be rigidly observed. He who undertakes this work should have one single object,—to present the original in those terms of his own language which will most faithfully represent it. As in seeking for the meaning he must use the lawful methods of interpretation and take the results to which they conduct him, so in expressing that meaning he must choose those words which in his judgment will best convey it to the reader without regard to any other authority. This rule must appear as just as it is simple. It is one which the translator should lay to his conscience. When I said that simplicity and richness of expression were not of the first importance, I had in mind this principle—that fidelity to the original should be regarded above every thing else.

Now it seems to me that it will not be easy to observe this rule if an old translation be taken as a basis or guide for the new one. There will be constant temptation to ‘conform’ the original to the version whose inaccuracy is indicated by the attempt to amend it. The very word is suspicious. It suggests the idea of a standard, where no standard can be taken without inconsistency. But not to press this point, it must be granted, if the rule which I have given be sound, that whenever the translator believes that he can render the original more faithfully by choosing other words than

those of the common version he is bound to take them in preference. However slight the difference, if he is satisfied that his is the better rendering he is inexcusable if he does not give it. When his choice lies between two words of precisely equal force, he may and generally should retain that which has the authority of previous use in its favor; but I can think of no other case in which he should be guided by the judgment of a former translator. He professes to present what he esteems the most accurate version of the words of his author, and this purpose he cannot fulfil if he suffers himself to be diverted from it by any influence however venerable, or to any extent however small.

If these remarks are correct, the complaint of frequent departure from the common version must be unjust to a modern translator; for if he be an honest man, he leaves this version only that he may walk more closely according to the original.

THE UNCORRUPTED PRESERVATION OF THE NEW
TESTAMENT.

[From Less on the New Testament.]

Dr Godfrey Less was a Professor in the University of Gottingen in the latter part of the last century. A translation of^a part of a large work written by him in German, entitled 'Geschichte der Religion,' History of Religion, was published in London in 1804. The contents of this part are expressed on the title-page.—

'The Authenticity, Uncorrupted Preservation, and Credibility of the New Testament.' I copy from this volume.

'The books extant at present in the New Testament are the same writings which were originally composed by the authors whose names they bear.

But it may perhaps be said, have not those books been long ago destroyed? Are not these which we have at present in the New Testament some of the writings, which in the early ages of Christianity were falsely ascribed to the immediate disciples of Jesus? Or how can we be assured, whether they are not so changed by latter interpolations and erasures as to have become entirely different from the originals?—It is therefore necessary to shew, that these writings have descended to us unaltered, or in other words, the uncorrupted preservation of our present New Testament. And this I shall prove,

1. From their contents.—As early as the first two centuries of the Christian era, we find the very same facts and the very same doctrines universally received by the Christians, which we of the present day believe on the credit of the New Testament. That Jesus was born under the Roman Emperor Augustus, and taught in the Jewish territory; that he publicly performed many and great miracles; was persecuted by his enemies the Jews, though innocent, even to death on the cross; and arose alive from the grave on the third day after his death; that a belief in this Jesus and his doctrine is the only way to salvation for all those to whom they have been promulgated; that this same Jesus has

published and ordained for his disciples the wisest and most salutary precepts in respect of our conduct towards God, towards ourselves, and towards our neighbour; that hereafter he will descend gloriously from heaven, into which he visibly ascended, in order to awaken the dead and to judge the whole race of mankind:—all this is asserted in all the earliest writings of Christian antiquity to have been the universal belief of Christians. And all this likewise is contained in those books which we now possess under the names of the Evangelists and Apostles.

2. Because a universal corruption of these writings was impossible; nor can the least vestige of such a corruption be found in history.—That these books should be universally corrupted was totally impossible from the very state of Christianity. The Christian religion, even in the first century, was spread through every part of the known world. From the persecutions which then took place, the distinct communities existing at Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Rome, and in many other considerable cities, had little or no external connexion with each other. As early as the first century arose Heretics, whose tenets were refuted by the Orthodox in their writings. Christians, even of no rank or consequence, were in possession of many copies of these books, which were revered and read with the greatest attention. During the first two centuries no secret was made of any one relation or doctrine of the holy Scriptures. On the contrary, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Irenæus, appeal to the facility which every one enjoyed of reading their Scriptures. And at a very early period many translations of them were made into

the Syriac and Latin languages. Now it must have been almost a miracle, if—notwithstanding the great variety of copies, and translations, of the originals, spread abroad among distinct communities existing in no external connexion with each other; notwithstanding these writings were held in profound reverence and diligently studied; notwithstanding the opposite vigilance of Heretics and Orthodox—if, I say, the writings of the Apostles and Evangelists had been falsified in *all* the copies of the originals, and of the various translations, without the opposition of any one community, or of any single teacher.

In the beginning, it is true, the Orthodox and Heretics reciprocally accused each other of having falsified the holy Scriptures. But even these very accusations evince the great attention with which the Christians watched over the purity of their sacred books, and the absolute impossibility of their *universal* corruption. * * * Augustine, in the fourth century, appeals with perfect confidence to the unanimous testimony of all the teachers, and manuscripts of antiquity. ‘What writings,’ says he, ‘can you receive as genuine, if you reject those of the Evangelists and Apostles? We are convinced of the genuineness of the apostolical writings in the same manner as we know that the works of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, or Varro, were derived from those whose names they bear. Who can be so absurd as to reject our Scriptures, for whose genuineness from the time of the Apostles the Church has deposed such numerous and concordant testimonies?’—This very accusation therefore of itself proves, that the arguments for the authenticity of the evangelical and apostolical writings are incontrovertible.

3. From the agreement of all the manuscripts.—The manuscripts of the Scriptures of the New Testament, which are still extant, are far more numerous than those of any other book in the world. Above two hundred and fifty have been already* collated by critics in their different editions. Of these, it is true, all do not contain the whole of the New Testament: the greater part have only the Gospels; others contain also the Acts and the Epistles of the Apostles; and a very small number the Revelation of St John. All these manuscripts, which were written in very different parts of the world, and of which some are above twelve hundred years old, give us the books of the New Testament in all *essential matters* perfectly accordant with each other. The various readings, consist almost entirely in nothing but palpable errors in transcription, or trifling grammatical and verbal differences which by no means make any alteration in the sense of the subject. Some indeed change the sense, yet only in passages which relate unimportant historical and geographical circumstances or other collateral matters. And the few which make any alteration in things of consequence do not on that account place us in absolute uncertainty. For either we can discover the true reading by collating the other manuscripts, versions and quotations found in the works of the ancients; or, should this not be the case, yet we can even then explain with certainty the doctrine from other passages of the sacred books.—These numerous variations therefore are the most convincing proof, that the Holy Scriptures have not been altered in any point of doctrine or morality, or other matter of

* This was written about fifty years ago.

importance ; because they are found perfectly concordant in all manuscripts of the originals and of the versions, which have been written and composed in Europe, Asia, and Africa. So far therefore from being hostile to the uncorrupted preservation of the books of our New Testament, these variations afford us on the contrary an additional and most convincing proof, that they exist at present in all essential matters as they left the hands of their authors.

4. From the agreement of the old versions, and quotations found in the ecclesiastical Fathers.—After all should any one entertain a doubt concerning the uncorrupted preservation of our books of the New Testament, it must perfectly vanish, if we consider the wonderful agreement of all the old versions, and of all the quotations and extracts found in the ecclesiastical Fathers. There is still extant a Syriac translation of all the books of the New Testament (the second Epistle of St Peter, the second and third Epistles of St John, the Epistle of St Jude, and the Revelation of St John, alone excepted,) which in all probability was made in the first century. In the same period existed in the western church Latin versions, of which considerable fragments still remain. The Latin translation of Jerom (which is generally called the Vulgate,) the Coptic, different Arabic, the Ethiopic, Armenian, Persic, and Gothic versions are indeed in part much more modern, and therefore not considered by critics on the New Testament as of equal consequence. Yet they prove thus much, that in all communities of Christians, both in the East and West, the *same writings* have ever been regarded as genuine works of the Evangelists and

Apostles, which we in the present day find still unaltered in our New Testament.—If we add to these circumstances, that the ecclesiastical Fathers of the first centuries have quoted almost *every* verse of the New Testament, and in regard to essential points exactly agreeably to our present text; also, that many of them (for instance, Origen, Chrysostom, Jerom, Augustin, Cyril of Alexandria, Theodoret, and Œcumenius,) have left us commentaries either on all or on individual books of the New Testament, of which the scriptural text exactly coincides with our printed copies,—we must without hesitation confess, that the books which are now extant in our editions of the New Testament are the uncorrupted writings of the Evangelists and Apostles.’

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

Judea groaned under the Roman yoke. She saw a Pagan governor ruling her state, and foreign troops repressing her struggles for freedom by their abode in her cities and even within the courts of her temple. She looked and prayed for the Messiah, the Deliverer who would requite the insolent Heathen with a vengeance which only one anointed by Jehovah could execute, the Prince whose reign would surpass all that the ancient chronicles told of David and Solomon, the Father of the everlasting age under whom the prosperity of the chosen people would be raised to a height from which it should never decline. The time for his appearance must be

near, and every eye was strained to discover the signs of his coming. At this period of universal excitement a voice was heard from the wilderness that lay between Jerusalem and the Jordan, proclaiming that the kingdom of heaven, the Messiah's reign, was at hand. The sound thrilled through the soul of the Jew. It seemed the echo of Providence to the language of his own ardent hope. Who can wonder that 'Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region along the Jordan' went out to John, and when in the garb and manner of the old prophets he preached repentance as the suitable preparation for the Messiah, who is surprised that they 'were baptized by him, confessing their sins?'

'The herald did not far precede his Master. The cry of the Baptist still rung on their ears, when another voice was heard declaring the same truth, 'the kingdom of heaven is at hand,' and urging the same duty, reformation. Who was this new preacher? He assumed neither the name nor style of the Messiah. He unfurled no banner, blew no note of war, and neither in person nor language satisfied the notions which were entertained respecting the Promised One. Yet he was a remarkable personage; his whole bearing, simple, firm, and independent, indicated a real superiority. John acknowledged his claim to preeminence, and it was too apparent to escape the notice of any one; for 'John did no miracle,' but here was one who healed the sick with a word and left the proofs of his supernatural power wherever he went. Though he did not openly declare himself the 'Desire of Israel,' he spoke of no one who should follow him. The public mind was at once gratified and perplexed, and crowds attended his

steps. After having been for some time the object of general curiosity, on an occasion when he found himself surrounded by thousands of every class and age, some of whom had professed a belief in his divine authority, he ascended an eminence near the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee, and having sat down after the manner of the Jewish Rabbins while his disciples came around him, began to teach them.

Such were the circumstances under which Jesus delivered that course of instruction which we call the Sermon on the Mount. I will not attempt to describe the surprise which his first words must have produced, but will suggest, in addition to what a friend has already said,* the grounds of the astonishment which we learn was felt by the multitudes at the close.

The first was the entire absence of the language and sentiments which they were most anxious to hear. Great as was their disappointment at the character of his introductory declarations, they doubtless expected that these would be followed by words more congenial to their wishes. Sentence after sentence baffled their hope. Still they listened in the belief that the next sound would harmonize with their expectations. But he closed without giving the least countenance to their ideas of the Messiah's office. He had said nothing of national freedom and glory. His tone was peaceful throughout. The narrow and vindictive patriotism of the Jew found no support in any threat which he uttered or any promise which he held out. On that theme on which every tongue was loud Jesus had been silent. Nor was it only

* See Scriptural Interpreter, vol. 1, pp. 153—162.

the want of correspondence with the tone of national feeling which struck them with amazement. There was no evidence of sympathy with common notions respecting the use and enjoyment of life. The love of riches had been rebuked, the appetite for pleasure had received no encouragement, earthly distinctions had been dishonored, and the spirit of censorious self-conceit chastised. Forgiveness, contentment and self-denial were urged on an ambitious, restless and licentious people. Their astonishment, if it was great when he began his instruction, must have grown with every new indication of its character and purpose.

Yet while he neither assumed the name nor satisfied their conceptions of the Messiah, he spoke with an authority that was new to them; and this circumstance increased their surprise. The most eminent of their teachers appealed to the writing or tradition of former times. They quoted the words of the ancients and employed themselves in their explanation. It was impossible that the least attentive auditor should not notice the contrast between the style of the Scribe whose enormous vanity rested on a pretence of learning, and that of Jesus whose brief but emphatic appeal was to his own ability and office. 'I say to you.' Here was no collection of proofs, no array of authorities, no casuistry nor sophistry. The words were those of one who felt himself to be more than 'a Master in Israel,' yet the manner in which they were uttered forbade the imputation of arrogance. They were spoken with that decision tempered by modesty which belongs to genuine superiority. The people must have been the more astenished at this self-reliance, because the history of Jesus before

he undertook the office of public teacher had not been such as to fasten expectation upon him.

The independence and originality of his teaching can not be properly estimated unless we observe its direct opposition to the lessons inculcated by the Scribes and Pharisees. Jesus reversed their decisions, manifested disrespect for their vain learning, and leaving in neglect the disputes which they attempted to magnify into importance, turned the attention of his disciples on subjects of real moment. He went still farther, and exposed the character of the men, who had raised themselves to power and who held their influence over the people by the grossest hypocrisy. Constituting the religious aristocracy of Judea, they not only demanded submission to their opinions but required an acknowledgement of their personal worth, which the great majority of their countrymen were willing to give. Yet Jesus openly taught, 'unless your righteousness shall excel that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven,' cannot be numbered among the followers of the Messiah. Few incidents in the life of Jesus so clearly prove his consciousness of a divine authority, as this unequivocal censure, this voluntary yet calm defiance (we might almost call it) of the chief men of the nation, when he was destitute of all apparent means of supporting or defending himself, and when every earthly motive would have prompted him to avoid their resentment, if he could not obtain their co-operation. The multitudes must have been filled with amazement, as they heard their spiritual guides, their patterns as well as teachers, pronounced unworthy either of confidence or imitation.

Remarkable in manner and novel in style as the instruction delivered from the Mount appears under the circumstances which we have noticed, its character makes it worthy of constant and universal admiration. Such teaching was new in Judea, but not in Judea alone. The world could furnish no similar example. Passages might be collected from different authors, Jewish and Heathen, between whose language and that of Jesus a resemblance might be traced. But here was a long discourse, marked throughout with heavenly wisdom, and inculcating in every sentence a pure morality. Not a word impaired its integrity as an exposition of duty. It insisted from the beginning to the end on virtue, righteousness, faithfulness in all the relations which connect man with Heaven and with earth. It penetrated beneath the surface to the deepest sources of character, taught the necessity of an interior virtue, promulgated laws which should control the secret life of the individual, and spoke in the same tone of decision of motives, dispositions and feelings as of the conduct. Sincerity, charity, self-denial were its great topics, and while many of the illustrations by which they were explained were drawn from the circumstances of that period, it was evident that they were illustrations of permanent principles. The sanctions by which the teacher enforced obedience were the most impressive that could be addressed to the human heart, for they rested on its own consciousness, on its hope and its fear, and on faith in immortality, which was assumed as an unquestionable fact.

The Sermon on the Mount is free alike from the puerilities of Jewish teaching and the practical errors

or doubtful speculations of Pagan moralists. The bad is condemned, however plausible it may be; the good and the right are declared to be the proper objects of pursuit, be the labor and sacrifice what they may.

The plainness moreover of these counsels recommends them to attention. Here are no abstruse investigations, no subtle reasonings, nothing above the common level of understanding and of duty. All is general, yet clear; and though every hearer went away astonished, none could have departed in doubt concerning the meaning of what he had heard.

The use which Jesus made of creation and Providence and human life as sources of illustration should not pass without notice. The common experience of his hearers, the facts of their daily observation, the ways of God and the ways of men that fall within the view of the least attentive or most poorly taught, became in his hands the instruments of conveying the most valuable truth into the mind. He showed that books need not be studied nor imagination tasked for the materials of religious discourse. For he who chooses may find an inscription on every spot of nature and of life, which he need only interpret in plain language and others will confess that, blind as they might have been to it, it must have been read by them all and was well worth the reading.

This portion of the New Testament then deserves our regard as it illustrates the character of Jesus, and the character of his religion, as it exhibits the inspiration which must have sustained and guided him, as it proves the indispensable importance of a good life, and as it reminds us that religious teaching should be direct,

plain and natural. If this fragment only of the evangelical histories had come down to us, we should have received, if not sufficient evidence that he who spake these words was sent from God, at least enough to excite our astonishment, and enough if diligently followed to make us forever happy.

THE VERSE SYSTEM.

All readers may not know what is meant by the verse system. It has been described by one of its friends as 'a method of studying the Scriptures, in which all the learners agree to learn a certain verse on a given day, and then continue to learn a verse every day, taking the verses in order as they stand on the sacred pages.' The persons who adopt the system commit to memory the same verse every day, and take the verses 'in the Bible order,' or consecutively as they are numbered through the chapter and then through the next chapter and so through the book. It was introduced in the year 1829, and at the beginning of the present year 'the number of learners in the United States and Canada was computed at nearly two hundred thousand.'

The advantages and defects of the plan are obvious. A portion of Scripture is daily studied and its language, if not its sentiment, is fixed in the mind of the learner. In this way a considerable amount is learned in a year,—about twelve chapters of thirty verses each. No time is taken from any other employment, for a verse may be committed to memory in a minute or two, and the

most busy have a few minutes of leisure in every day. But a more important benefit is the immediate use to which each passage may be turned. It becomes a text for the day, which may be repeated and considered many times without any interruption of our ordinary pursuits, and will suggest profitable trains of thought to interest the mind and impress the heart.

There can therefore be no doubt that this plan will promote an acquaintance with the Bible, and may assist the Christian in his religious life. But if conducted as it has now been explained, it is liable to objections which might be obviated by a slight change. Let the principle of selection be substituted for the order of verses and chapters as they stand in the several books, and the daily study of a passage—it may or may not be a single verse—would be an excellent practice. The disadvantages of the present mode are these.

By confining the learner for a long time, even for years, to a particular division of Scripture, it may fasten his attention on this to the neglect of other parts. At least they will not probably be used for a similar purpose, or as a store-house from which texts may be taken and deposited in the memory. The Bible is too large a book for so slow a process as that of committing verse after verse in regular succession. Privilege of choice must be allowed or years will elapse before many of the most valuable portions will have been learned. The verse assigned for the first day of last January, for example, was John xx. 6. After finishing the Gospel of John the learner commences Acts, and on the last day of December he will have proceeded as far as Acts ix. 21. About two years more will be needed to

complete Acts. It cannot be wise to confine the advantages of the plan for so long a period to this book. The system may indeed be pursued till in twenty-two years the whole New Testament will have been acquired, But the uncertainty of life, and the duty of exercising good judgment in our arrangements for every part of it, should be considered.

A more serious objection to this indiscriminate method of learning the Bible is its tendency to equalize the value of the different parts. As each verse is successively made the topic of meditation for the day, all receive (so far as the system is concerned) the same attention. Yet no one can open the Bible without perceiving that both the larger and the smaller sections into which it is divided, the chapters not less than the verses, have different degrees of importance and contain various measures of instruction. Some passages convey the most solemn truth, while others serve little other purpose than that of connexion between the members of a discourse, a narrative or an argument. To place all on the same ground as entitled to an equal share of attention, is to do injustice to the Scriptures and to obstruct a just apprehension of their meaning. Men are too much disposed to regard the letter rather than the spirit, and this method may confirm them in the error by claiming for each verse the same consideration.

The most injurious effect however is the severing of passages from their connexion and presenting them as independent remarks. In many instances this is unjustifiable. The text depends on the connexion for its meaning. Without the context it may not have any meaning. It is imperfect, a fragment of a sentence.

The 'crumbling' of the sacred volume, as it has been not inaptly termed, by dividing it into these minute portions, sundering what was not meant to be separated, or to change the figure, wrenching a passage at once from its connexion and its sense, as it is one of the most common, is also one of the worst practices into which readers of the Bible can fall. It throws a tenfold deeper obscurity over the sacred pages than that in which their age or peculiar character involves them. The Bible is not a collection of maxims such as we find in the Book of Proverbs, which may be disjoined from what precedes and what follows. Many passages will bear this dislocation, but others cannot be subjected to it without the greatest injury.

These reasons may satisfy us that it would be better to select verses or sentences than to take them in the order of the book. With this change the plan may be recommended as one suited to be highly beneficial. The selection of the same passages for all the learners cannot, I think, be necessary. This feature in the 'system' is, I believe, deemed important by its friends, and the difficulty of making a choice which all will approve may have led to the adoption of the course the evils of which I have noticed. But may not the private Christian be trusted to choose his own text for the day, and if persuaded of the advantage that he might derive from such a practice, must he not be inclined to adopt it? Two or three little books, of such a diminutive size that they may be carried about the person without any inconvenience, have lately been published with the express purpose of furnishing a useful passage from Scripture for the meditation of every day. Let one of these be

bought, or let the biblical student make such a book for himself, or let him take every morning some passage in the portion of Scripture which he is then reading or which he read on the previous evening, and commit it to memory. It will be as a spring of living water within him through the day, refreshing his soul amidst the labour of life, and reminding him of a better state than that through which he is passing.

ON THE MOSAICAL DISTINCTION OF ANIMALS INTO CLEAN
AND UNCLEAN.

[From Harris's Natural History of the Bible.]

In the year 1820, Rev. Thaddeus M. Harris, D. D. of Dorchester, published an octavo volume of nearly 500 pages called 'The Natural History of the Bible ; or A Description of all the Quadrapeds, Birds, Fishes, Reptiles, and Insects, Trees, Plants, Flowers, Gems and Precious Stones, mentioned in the Sacred Scriptures; collected from the best authorities, and alphabetically arranged.' It bears on every page the marks of diligent study and accurate learning, and is a most useful book for the biblical scholar. It has however in this country met with neglect that is far from being to our honor, while in England it has been once and again reprinted. Prefixed the work are three dissertations, from the last of which is taken the matter for this article.

‘ In the eleventh chapter of the book of Leviticus is a catalogue of beasts, fishes, birds, &c. which God had either permitted the Israelites to eat, or which were prohibited.

The marks of discrimination are the following :

1. Of **Quadrupeds**. ‘ The animals prohibited as *unclean* were the *solipedes*, or those with one hoof, as the horse, and the ass : the animals allowed to be eaten as *clean* were the *fissipedes*, or those of hoofs divided into two parts, or cloven, as oxen, deer, sheep, and goats. But then this distinction must be entire, not partial ; effective, not merely apparent : and besides its external construction its internal, its anatomical, construction must also be correctly correspondent to this formation. Moreover, animals whose feet are divided into more than two parts are unclean ; so that the number of their toes, as three, four, or five, is an entire rejection of them, whatever other quality they may possess.

‘ Such appears to be the principle of the Levitical distinction of animals, clean and unclean, so far as relates to their *feet* ; their *rumination* is a distinct character, but a character absolutely unavailing without the more obvious and evident marks derivable from the construction of their members. This, then, seems to be the legislative naturalist’s most obvious distinction ; a distinction which the eye of the unlearned can appropriate at sight, and therefore it is adapted to public information.’

The preceding remarks are taken from the author of ‘ Scripture Illustrated ; ’ and Michaelis in his ‘ Commentary on the laws of Moses,’ (article cciv.) observes, ‘ that

in so early an age of the world we should find a systematic division of quadrupeds so excellent as never yet, after all the improvements in Natural History, to have become obsolete, but on the contrary to be still considered as useful by the greatest masters of the science, cannot but be looked upon as truly wonderful.'

2. Of Fishes. Those that were permitted for food, and declared *clean*, were 'such as had fins and scales.'

3. Of Birds. 'There are no particular characters given for distinguishing these by classes, as clean or unclean; but a list of exceptions is rendered, and these are forbidden without enumerating those which are allowed. It will be found however on consideration, that those which live on grain are not prohibited; and, as these are the domesticated kinds, we might almost express it in other words,—that birds of prey generally are rejected, that is, those with crooked beaks and strong talons; whether they prey on lesser fowls, on animals, or on fish: while those which eat vegetables are admitted as lawful. So that the same principle is maintained, to a certain degree, among birds as among beasts.'

4. All creatures that creep, going upon all four, and whatsoever goeth upon the belly, or whatsoever hath more feet than four among creeping things, are declared to be an abomination. With regard however to those winged insects which besides four walking legs have also two longer springing legs an exception is made, and under the denomination of locusts they are declared to be clean.

I proceed now to assign some of the reasons for this distinction. Cunnæus declares that though no doubt the law for the distinction of animals in the xith chapter

of Leviticus was enacted with wise counsel, yet the special reason of the lawgiver cannot be known. Others however have undertaken to assign various reasons for it; and these, as adduced by Spencer, Lowman, Michaelis, and several learned writers, I propose to collect and state, intermixing such remarks and illustrations as have been suggested to me in the course of that laborious investigation which I have given to this subject.

The Scripture, which is our safest guide in inquiries of this nature, informs us that the design was both *moral* and *political*, being intended to preserve the Jews a distinct people from the nations of idolatry. 'This is declared Leviticus xx. 24, 25, 26. 'I am the Lord your God, who have separated you from other people; ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean: and ye shall not make-yourselves abominable by beast, or by fowl, or by any living thing that creepeth on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean: and ye shall be holy unto me, for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.' As if Jehovah had said, 'I have selected you from, and exalted you far above the ignorant and idolatrous world. Let it be your care to conduct yourselves worthy of this distinction. Let the quality of your food, as well as the rites of your worship, display your peculiar and holy character. Let even your manner of eating be so appropriate, so pure, so nicely adjusted by my law, as to convince yourselves and all the world that you are indeed separated from idolaters and devoted to me alone.'* 'Agreeably with this Moses tells them, Deut. xiv. 2, 3, 21, 'The Lord hath chosen

* Dr Tappan's Lectures, p. 260.

you to be a peculiar people unto himself. Ye shall not eat any abominable thing. Ye shall not eat any thing that dieth of itself; ye shall give it to the stranger, or sell it to an alien; for ye are a holy people.' That is, since God has invested you with singular honor and favor, you ought to reverence yourselves; you ought to disdain the vile food of Heathen idolaters; such food you may lawfully give or sell to foreigners, but a due self-respect forbids you to eat it.

I. The immediate and primary intention of the law was, as I apprehend, to break the Israelites from the ill habits they had been accustomed to or indulged in Egypt, and to keep them forever *distinct* from that corrupt people both in principles and practices; and, by parity of reason, from all other idolatrous nations. No more simple or effectual method could be devised for preventing all ensnaring intercourse, or dangerous assimilation, than by a law regulating their food; for nothing separates one people from another more than that one should eat what the other considers as unlawful or rejects as improper. Those who cannot eat and drink together are never likely to become intimate. We see an instance of this in the case of the Egyptians, who from time immemorial had been accustomed to consider certain animals as improper for food, and therefore to avoid all intercourse with those who ate or even touched what they deemed defiling. See Gen. xliii. 32. Hence they and the Hebrews could not eat together, and of course could not associate or live together; for some of the animals which the Hebrews ate were among them not indeed unclean but sacred, being so expressly consecrated to a deity that they durst not

slaughter them. The Hebrews by killing and eating these animals must appear not only odious but sacrilegious, transgressing the rules of good behaviour and offending the gods. Other animals, as several of the birds of prey, were also held sacred by the Egyptians, or were venerated in the rites of augury.* The Hebrews, being instructed to consider these as unclean, would be prevented from the indulgence of the like superstition. Hence Origen justly admired the Jewish ritual, and observes that those animals which are prohibited by Moses were such as were reputed sacred by the Egyptians and used in divination by other nations. And Montfaucon, in his *Hexapl. Orig.* has published a fragment of Eusebius Emisenus, from a manuscript Catena in the library of the king of France, which may be thus translated: 'God wills that they should eat some kinds of flesh and that they should abstain from others, not that any of them in themselves were common or unclean, but this he did on two accounts; the one was that he would have those animals to be eaten which were worshipped in Egypt, because eating them would render their pretensions most contemptible. And, pursuant to the same opinion, he forbids the eating of those kinds which the Egyptians used to eat very greedily and luxuriously, as the swine, &c. The other reason was, that their properties and natures seemed to lay a prejudice in the way of some of these, and to render them, as it were, a sort of profanation. Some were monstrously big, others very ugly, others fed upon dead

* The hawk was dedicated to Osiris, the eagle to the god Ammon of Thebais, the raven to Orus. The custom of consecrating all the birds of prey to the gods came originally from the Egyptians.

bodies, and to others human nature had an inbred antipathy; so that, in the main, what the law forbid was nature's aversion before.' Thus were the Jews taught to distinguish themselves from that people not only in their religious worship, not being allowed 'to sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians,' Exod. viii. 26, but to deviate from them in the most common actions in life. By having a diet peculiar to themselves, by eating in one instance that to which the others attributed a certain sanctity, as the ox, the sheep, and the goat, and by holding in detestation those creatures which the others venerated as sacred, as the hawk, &c. they would be precluded from all intimacy or agreement; and of course from becoming corrupted by their idolatries or addicted to their superstitions.*

Not only were the Egyptians but other heathen nations, and particularly the Canaanites, grossly corrupt in their manners, morals, and worship: and this restriction with respect to diet was alike calculated to prevent intimacies with them; so that in no instance should 'their table become a snare, or their entertainments a trap.' †

II. Another reason for the distinction was, that as the Jews were a people peculiarly devoted to God, they should be reminded of that relation by a particularity of diet, which should serve emblematically as a sign of their obligation to study *moral purity*. This is expressly given as the reason, Leviticus xi. 43, 44, 45, (referring

* Chæremon, in Porphyry de Abstinencia, l. iv. c. 7. tells us that the Egyptian priests would not eat any sort of fish which their country afforded, nor any animals that had *solid hoofs, or divided paws, or horns*.

† Psalm lxix. 22.

to the forbidden animals,) 'Ye shall not make yourselves unclean with them, that you may be defiled thereby; for I am the Lord, that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God; ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.' The meaning of which is, 'I Jehovah, who am distinguished from all other gods, am your peculiar sovereign, and have selected and separated you from all other people; therefore you must be holy, and, as indicative of this, you are distinguished from all other people by sacred manners and institutions, and especially by a distinction in the articles of your food, that you may know yourselves to be set apart from all other nations of the world, and in your very diet evidence to them the *purity* which you should in every thing cherish and preserve.'—As thus Jehovah meant to impress on his people a constant sense of his own infinite purity as 'the Holy One of Israel,' so he meant to habituate them to regard and honor him as such by the conspicuous purity both of their manners and worship. Not one of the Pagan gods so much as pretended to purity of character, or claimed to be worshipped under the title of the Holy One. Far from this, even the worship of these gods was frequently performed by impure rites and the use of vile and filthy animals,* by which the worshippers proclaimed the foul character of their deities. On the contrary, the pure ceremonies of the Hebrews constantly reminded them of the immaculate purity of Jehovah, and this nice distinction of meats was fitted to teach them the rudiments of moral purity or true holiness; Isaiah lxx. 3, 4; lxxvi. 17.

* This is the prevailing reason assigned by the Fathers of the Christian Church.

As several of the remarks adapted to this head were anticipated in the preceding, I go on to state other reasons for the distinction between animals as *clean* and *unclean* in the Levitical institute.

III. It has been suggested that the quality of the food itself is an important consideration, and that to the eating of certain animals may be ascribed a specific influence on the *moral temperament*. I introduce this topic rather because it is insisted upon so much among the ancient Jewish interpreters, than because I consider it of any real force or importance. It savours strongly of the allegorical style of reasoning and interpretation in which the Rabbins delighted. There are several *Mischical* tracts devoted to this explication. One of them says, 'As the body is the seat of the soul, God would have it a fit instrument for its companion, and therefore removes from his people all those obstructions which may hinder the soul in its operations; for which reason all such meats are forbidden as breed ill blood; among which if there may be some whose hurtfulness is neither manifest to us nor to physicians, wonder not at it, for the faithful physician who forbids them is wiser than any of us.'

The moral, or tropological, reasons alleged by Aristæus, in Eusebius *Præp. Evang.* l. viii. c. 9, are in substance, (for the whole passage is long, though curious,) that the Jews should by these inhibitions and limitations be secured and fenced from whatever contagion or immorality might otherwise invade them and spread among them from any heathen or idolatrous quarter; and also to teach them *morality* even in their food, for the birds and beasts allowed were of the tame and gentler kinds.

and not of fierce and voracious natures, to teach them the great truths of justice, moderation and kindness.

IV. Another reason for the distinction here made was without doubt *dietetical*, and to make a distinction between wholesome and unwholesome food. Those animals are denominated *clean* which afford a copious and wholesome nutriment, and those *unclean* whose flesh is unwholesome and yields a gross nutriment, often the occasion of scrofulous and scorbutic disorders. Michaelis assigns this as the principal reason.

The special propriety of it may be found also in the situation of those regions in which the Jews resided, in which the flesh of some animals was more unwholesome than it would be in a more northern climate. Their sultry climate made it necessary to be considerate in the use of food, as they were exposed to inflammatory and putrid disorders. So that the wisdom of the interdiction of those kinds of flesh which tend soon to corruption is very evident. Blood in particular is not only difficult of digestion in the stomach, but easily putrifies; and so the flesh of strangled animals, or of wild animals heated by the chase and full of blood, soon becomes corrupt. The free use of very fat meat is always prejudicial to health, and is the cause of bilious and putrid disorders. The flesh of the swine in particular, which is generally supposed to breed the leprosy, as an aliment must have been highly improper for a people so subject to leprosy as the Jews appear to have been.

Of those animals whose flesh the Israelites were prohibited from eating, most sought their food in filthy places, lived on prey, or fed on carrion; so that their juices were in a state strongly tending to putrescence;

of course, their flesh was very unfit for the purposes of nutrition.

Agreeably to this opinion, Dr James, the learned author of the 'Medicinal Dictionary,' under the article 'Alcali,' after having made some critical remarks on the nature of alcalescent aliments and their effects on the human body, draws the following conclusion: 'From what has been said in relation to the alcalescence of animal aliment, one reason at least will appear, why it pleased the Supreme Being to forbid the Jews, a people that inhabited a very warm climate, the use of many sorts of animals as food; and why they were enjoined to take away a great deal of blood from those which they were allowed to eat.'

On the whole, as Mr Lowman justly observes, 'the food allowed to the chosen nation was of the milder sort, of the most common and domestic animals; creatures of the cleanest feeding, which afforded the most palatable and nourishing meat, and which by a proper care might be had in the greatest plenty and perfection. If the Jews as a select and holy people ought to have any distinction of foods, surely none could have been devised more proper than this. Was not this far better than to license and encourage the promiscuous hunting of wild beasts and birds of prey, less fit for food, more difficult to be procured, and hardly consistent with a domestic, agricultural and pastoral life? Did not the restrictions in question tend to promote that health and ease, that useful cultivation of the soil, that diligence, mildness and simplicity, that consequent happiness and prosperity, which were among the chief blessings of the promised land?'

PROFITABLE READING OF THE BIBLE.

WE ought to be sensible that it is a great privilege, and if rightly used it would be an invaluable blessing to us, to live in a land where the Bible, the great store-house of religious knowledge, the great armory for the spiritual warfare, the great fountain of the waters of life and peace and hope, is within every body's reach, open to every one's inspection and use. It is a great privilege, and ought to be a great blessing to us, that we live in a land where the humblest and the poorest may attain to that degree of cultivation which is requisite to read and understand this precious volume, and to draw from it rich supplies of spiritual light and strength and peace. Among the instructions of Jesus we find a parable which may teach us something of our obligations in regard to this sacred book;—I mean the parable in which men are represented as intrusted by their lord with a gift or loan of a pound each, to be improved to the best advantage till he should come again to reckon with them. The Bible is precisely such a gift, conferred upon every one who has the means to procure and the ability to read and understand it. That parable farther teaches us, that when the lord returned he bestowed his approbation and favor on those who had exerted themselves to improve their trust, and in proportion to their improvement of it; whilst he who had neglected to use it was rejected as a slothful, negligent, ungrateful and wicked servant. It is not said that he abused his lord's gift in any way but by simply neglecting to use it; and yet he was cast off, and declared unworthy to receive

any farther trust or employment in his lord's service. It well becomes us therefore to consider what constitutes a right use of the revelation we have received from heaven; that when our Lord shall come to take account of those to whom he has committed that invaluable treasure, we may be able to meet him with some degree of satisfaction and confidence.

It is melancholy to reflect how many there are in every christian community, who make no better improvement of their Bibles than the neglectful servant did of the pound intrusted to him. For what better improvement is it of one's Bible to let it lie neglected and unread week after week than it would be to wrap it up in a napkin or bury it in the earth? Let any one's good sense determine if there is any difference between the two cases. What purpose can the mere owning of a Bible answer, except to aggravate the condemnation of one who having it always near him never uses it? Is there a secret charm in the mere possession of this sacred book, which can make him a better man? Let him now determine if this great revelation of God's will was not given to us, that by the faithful use of it we might become better men; if it was not given to us, that by reading and studying it diligently and carefully our minds might be imbued with the knowledge of God, of duty, and of the way of salvation by Jesus Christ; if, in fine, it was not given to us to be an important means of renovating our hearts, of inspiring us with pure and elevated principles of action, and thus of redeeming us from sin and fitting us for a higher state; and must he not in determining this acknowledge that he condemns himself—that in neglecting his Bible he has neglected

the best interests of his spiritual nature? There is certainly no magical influence in the Scriptures, no miraculous power to produce their blessed effects upon us. If they be not read and studied with some degree of diligence, they can be of no more service to us than so much blank paper. No farther than we use our minds upon it, can the Bible, or any other book, be of the least use to us. God has lighted up this candle for us and placed it near to us; but what the better shall we be for it, if we hide it away in a secret place, or if instead of reading our duty by its light we constantly turn our eyes away to other objects?

I have made these general remarks, to show the ingratitude and wickedness of that habitual neglect of the sacred writings in which men too often live. I do not mean that such neglect always springs from a disposition hostile to religion. I know there are many people not unfriendly to religion, though not decidedly engaged in its service, as they should be, who from indolence or from devotion to the world or from thoughtlessness permit themselves to live in a criminal inattention to this great means of improvement and sanctification, with which their Creator has furnished them. But they are wrong; they are doing a wrong to their souls of which conscience will never acquit them. The first great duty which a man owes to his Bible is to read it, examine its contents, explore its treasures of heavenly wisdom. I say not that in all its parts it is equally rich and instructive. The older portions of it were designed for a simple and rude state of society, and in some important respects they lack the full and clear light of the Christian revelation. Still if read with a discriminative

judgment and with an earnest desire for improvement, they cannot but be read with profit. But I am not so anxious to show what parts of it should be most read, as I am to insist that the whole be not neglected; that it never be suffered to lie long unopened upon the table or the shelf; indeed that not a single day be permitted to pass away without some portion of it having been perused and reflected on.

To some this may appear to be binding them down too closely, and making this duty a task which must soon become wearisome and distasteful. But I am persuaded this is a great mistake. The low and vacillating interest with which the reading of the Scriptures is now so often attended, is owing to the mind's never being properly given to it. No one ever takes a very hearty interest in anything until he makes a business of it. Whatever we do with constancy and persevering effort we soon come to do with satisfaction and delight. This is a great law of the human mind, and one well worthy of consideration in many other particulars besides its assistance to us in reading the Scriptures. To mention only one, any person may observe how men come to engage in the business of their proper vocation with satisfaction and profit, just in proportion as they devote themselves to it with diligence and keep their attention from wandering to other things. In proportion as they relax that diligence and suffer their minds to be diverted from their occupation, they feel less and less interested in it, and that which but lately was a pleasure to them soon becomes a task, a burden, a grievance. The religious man too feels the benefit of this great law of the mind. He finds all the duties of religion and

piety,—for example, self examination, prayer, and the faithful use of the appointed means of religion,—performed with increasing delight and advantage in proportion as they are engaged in with more constancy and perseverance. The habitual reading of the holy Scriptures is one of the most sacred duties of the religious life; and like all the rest, if it is to be performed with any comfort or advantage, it must be practised with earnest diligence and unremitted effort. ‘Search the Scriptures.’ This duty is clearly and emphatically enjoined not only in the Bible itself but in the nature and reason of the case. God has commanded it in the very act of giving us a revelation of his will; he has commanded it in the very act of giving us reason, conscience, an imperishable soul, to which that revelation is adapted.

But I am well aware that it is leaving the matter very short, simply to urge upon people to search the Scriptures diligently; because it is very possible that this may be done, and done with great perseverance and research, without accomplishing any of the moral purposes which it was the principal object of the whole revelation to effect. The holy Scriptures, as I have said, were intended to be a means of making us better men, more worthy of our heavenly origin and of our heavenly destination, than without them we could possibly be; and in the right and faithful use of them they are calculated to make us such men. But as they may be and often are read and studied, they do us not the least good. Very often they are perused, as I believe most persons may have observed in their own experience, without any beneficial influence coming from them over the heart and the life. People who look at this matter

conscientiously cannot but anxiously desire to find out what rules must be followed in reading the Bible, to make it as useful to us as God intended it to be. I will try to lay down a few of these rules.

In the first place then, when we sit down to peruse the record of God's truth we should bear it on our minds, that the book which we are taking into our hands is no ordinary book; the truths it conveys are more important to us than all other truths. From that book we have received the knowledge of God and his glorious perfections. To that blessed volume we owe it that we are not now worshipping stocks and stones, or paying adoration to beings whom if we did not dread we should hate and despise. The Bible reveals to us a Being whom we cannot but love whilst we reverence and adore him. It reveals to us the Father of our spirits, the infinite, eternal One, — the great, the only object of adoration, the centre of all excellence, the fountain of all good to the creatures he has made. We should not take up lightly nor peruse without sensibility the book which brings us to the knowledge of such a Being, which teaches us to look up to him in prayer, and to confide in him as a little child does in his parent. Again; to that book we owe the knowledge of Jesus Christ, — the light, the life, the hope, the salvation of the humble believer in him. There are the assurances of resurrection and eternal life; there is contained all that is yet known of the plan of redeeming love; there, amidst the affecting delineations of the Saviour's character, sufferings and death — his living and dying sacrifice of himself, are frequently urged in expressions of deep and tender concern the delusion and guilt of sin, the

blessedness of deliverance from it, the inestimable worth of the soul, and the necessity of personal holiness. Now if we do but reflect that without the book which we are about to look into our minds would still have been closed to all these and many more thoughts of intense interest, we shall contemplate it, I think, as a book to be honored above all others; to be approached not indeed with superstitious reverence, but with a serious, tender and devout frame of mind, such as we should naturally have felt in the presence and listening to the instructions of Jesus himself.

I consider this devout feeling of so much consequence to a right and profitable perusal of the holy Scriptures, that I shall lay it down as the second great rule for this purpose, that we always try to come to this task in a devotional spirit. When the mind is brought into communion with God, it is in the best possible state for selecting such portions of the Bible as will be most useful to it, and for understanding and entering largely into their meaning. The Scriptures, the Christian Scriptures particularly, were written under the influence of a heavenly spirit; their great truths were breathed forth in the conviction that the divine mind had inspired them. And we can best understand them in all their fulness and wealth of meaning, when we come to them with something of the same heavenly temper in which they were written; when we come to them with a consciousness of our need of something to elevate our views and feelings, and with fervent aspirations after it; in short, when we come to them in a prayerful frame of mind, with a devout impression that we are in the presence of God and holding converse with him.

Why is it impossible for a debauched and impure mind to relish the productions of a chaste and delicate one? Why is a sordid and avaricious disposition incapable of receiving pleasure from the description of great and blessed and praiseworthy deeds of benevolence? And again, why to the mere worldling are the truest representations of the peace and joy that belong to a praying heart all tasteless and unmeaning? Is it not plainly because that in each of these cases there are two minds brought together which yet are in such opposite states that they can never enter into each other? There is no affinity between them, but a mutual repulsion. There is the same difference in reading the Scriptures with understanding and profit in different states of the mind. They were written in a pure and fervent spirit of piety; and if we come to the perusal of them in a low and earthly frame of mind, if our bosoms swell not with emotion at the thought of our connexion with God, and with desires so to read the volume which contains his holy truth as to find it 'a well of water' to our thirsty souls 'springing up unto everlasting life,' we may read it indeed, and may by the help of notes and commentaries flatter ourselves that what we have been examining is made very plain and clear, and we may think that we have faithfully discharged our duty in regard to the sacred writings, while yet we have never advanced beyond the mere letter; the spirit and meaning that give life have not reached us. We have read the word of life coldly, critically and without sensibility, and its life has escaped us. The head, not the heart, has been at work. The finer feelings of the soul have not been brought into action, and have received no benefit.

I certainly do not mean to object to the use of judicious commentaries and all the other outward helps within our reach for understanding the Scriptures; but if we make these our whole dependence, to the neglect of that most important of all helps, a devotional spirit, we make a most sad mistake; one that neutralizes to us the life-giving power of God's truth, incapacitates our souls for receiving nutriment from the bread which came down from heaven. Without a devout mind the Scriptures cannot be 'profitable for reproof, for correction and instruction in righteousness;' because in these operations of divine truth upon the character the affections and feelings must be brought actively into exercise. 'With the *heart* man believeth unto righteousness;' and with the *heart* he must read and study his Bible unto righteousness. The external helps for understanding the Scriptures are only helps after all; though when rightly used they have much value. But a devout spirit is an essential thing, an indispensable requisite to entering into the richness and fulness of their meaning. I doubt not that many an uncultivated but pious mind has penetrated far deeper into the true and life-inspiring sense of holy writ than many a profound scholar, and has derived from its pages a strength and comfort and joy in believing unknown to the mere critic, however deep and penetrating his researches may have been.

Be it remembered too, that while the spirit of prayer will render the reading of the Bible profitable and delightful to us, on the other hand we shall find a new vigor and ardor animating our prayers from this devotional reading of the Scriptures. How should it be otherwise than that the Bible should enrich our prayers

with the choicest and best language of devotion, when so large a portion of it is so kindled and glowing with a devotional fervor? We must sit down then to peruse our Bibles in the spirit of prayer, if we wish to have a heavenly energy transfused from their pages into our hearts. Much in them may still be difficult for us to understand; but if we come with a soul hungering after the bread of life, we shall not dwell long on difficult parts nor perplex ourselves with things which it is not yet given to us to know; but shall pass on to the contemplation of truths full of meaning, and able to rouse our slumbering faculties and fill us with new resolution and strength to engage in the conflict with sin.

I have now laid down what I conceive to be the most important of all requisites for a right and profitable perusal of the sacred Scriptures. And could I be sure that the injunction to which I last invited attention would be faithfully complied with, could I be sure that a pure and fervent spirit of prayer would always be brought to the reading of the Bible, and that everything hostile to such a spirit would be expelled from the breast, I should think it hardly necessary to say a word more upon the subject. I should feel sure that in such a frame of mind the sincere inquirer after truth could hardly be led into any hurtful error, and would eventually work himself clear of such as he might already have imbibed. But here there is so much room for self-deception, so many dispositions at variance with a truly prayerful spirit are apt to creep in and mingle with it if not wholly neutralize it, that in truth it would still be leaving this matter short to break off without at least one farther direction.

As a third great rule then for reading our Bibles to good purpose, we should resolve in entering upon this duty to divest our minds as far as possible of party attachments. I acknowledge it suits the natural weakness of our minds, and still more it suits their indolence, to have the privilege of taking our religious views without much examination from those with whom we have religious sympathies. But such an influence from without over our minds should be anxiously guarded against. It is unworthy of beings to whom God has given understandings of their own. It is unworthy of those who believe in the right of private judgment and the sufficiency of the Scriptures as a rule of faith. It is unworthy of them, because so far as they yield to its influence their understandings are enslaved and their principles are inoperative. That respect which is due to their own minds and to the Scriptures of truth is tamely yielded to the dictates of others, and God and their own minds and the sacred Scriptures are deeply dishonored.

I do not say that even if we come to the search after bible truth in the best exercise of our own judgment, we may expect to have it all made clear and to have every doubt removed. But we may come to that search in the full confidence, that if it be pursued in the spirit of pure and fervent prayer and in the unbiassed employment of the understanding God has given we shall attain to all the truth which is needful for us. We may take courage from the divine assurance, that 'the way of holiness' is so plain that 'wayfaring men though fools need not err therein,' and by consequence that everything in the sacred writings which is difficult to

be understood or of doubtful interpretation cannot be an essential part of that way of holiness. We may draw near to this sacred inquiry,—nay, it is our duty to do so,—leaning as much as possible upon God and the understandings he has given us, and as little as possible upon the systems and schemes of fallible men. We should try to put out of our thoughts the perplexing and abstruse questions which speculative and subtle minds have raised about the meaning of Scripture, and by which they have made the way of holiness too dark and intricate for any but a philosopher and a metaphysician to walk in it. Their refinements and distinctions we ought not to regard. The Saviour taught his disciples that they must receive his instructions with the simplicity of children; and with the same simplicity we should read the Bible. We should read it studiously, without any reference to what this or that man has said it contains, or to what this or that sect have set up as fundamental truths. We may indeed read about such things, and may get all the knowledge we can in regard to the religious opinions and practices that prevail in the world; but when we sit down to read our Bibles our inquiry should be, not whether we can find support for this or that set of doctrines, but simply what does the divine word teach us? We may use freely all the helps for explaining the Scripture which come within our reach, so long as we look upon them in their just light, as being mere helps, and do not place too much dependence upon them. But the great object never to be forgotten in searching the Scripture is, to have our own minds brought into action and their independence of all party attachments maintained. There is need of

perpetual caution, lest the opinions of those with whom we may be connected in religion should have an undue and injurious influence upon our minds. In proportion as a man's religious views are regarded as a great and sacred concern, it becomes more indispensable that his own mind alone should determine what those views are to be. As no one but himself can be answerable for his belief, no one but himself ought to have the forming of it.

Let me say in conclusion, that the modest, timid mind need not fear to venture by itself into the temple of truth. 'The mind that comes alone, trusting in God, is the most acceptable worshipper there. Such a mind may be assured that that good Being from whom comes all light and all knowledge, and who is ever present in the praying heart, will cause 'new light constantly to break forth to its view from the pages of his truth. He will graciously guide that mind into all saving truth, and guard it against every hurtful error.

R. F. WALLCUT.

PECULIAR LANGUAGE APPLIED TO JEWS IN THE BIBLE.

[From Taylor's Key to the Apostolic Writings.]

Taylor's Key is well known to theological students. It is prefixed to his 'Paraphrase with Notes on the Epistle to the Romans,' and is called by the author 'An essay to explain the gospel-scheme and the principal words and phrases the apostles have used in describing it.' John Taylor was a dissenting minister at Norwich,

England, and died in 1761. The second and sixth chapters of the 'Key' contain respectively an explanation of 'the particular honors and privileges of the Jewish nation while they were the peculiar people of God,' and 'of Christians or of those of any nation who profess faith in the Son of God,' 'and the terms signifying those honors.' Numerous passages are quoted as examples of the use of these terms, but as the insertion of all the references would require too large a portion of this number to be devoted to these extracts, I give a single reference under each term. The reader may easily find other texts by the help of a Concordance.

'The state and privileges of the Jewish nation will be better understood, if we carefully observe the particular phrases by which their relation to God and his favors to them are expressed in Scripture. And,

1. As God in his infinite wisdom and goodness was pleased to prefer them before any other nation and to single them out for the purposes of revelation and preserving the knowledge, worship and obedience of the true God, God is said to *choose* them, and they are represented as his *chosen*, or *elect* people, Deut. vii. 6, Isai. xlv. 4. Hence reinstating them in their former privileges is expressed by *choosing* them again, Zech. ii. 12.

2. The first step he took in execution of his purpose of election was, to rescue them from their wretched situation in the servitude and idolatry of Egypt and to carry them through all enemies and dangers to the liberty and happy state to which he intended to advance them. With regard to which the language of Scripture

is, 1. that he *delivered*, Exod. iii. 8; 2. *saved*, Exod. xiv. 30; 3. *bought*, Deut. xxxii. 6, or *purchased*,* Exod. xv. 16; 4. *redeemed* them, 2. Sam. vii. 23. Thus God was their *Saviour*, and *salvation*, Psal. cvi. 21, Exod. xv. 2; and hence is styled their *Redeemer*, Psal. lxxviii. 35.

3. As God fetched them out of Egypt, invited them to the honors and happiness of his people and by many express declarations and acts of mercy engaged them to adhere to him as their God, he is said to *call* them, and they were his *called*, Hos. xi. 1, Isai. xlviii. 12.

* In order to understand the notion of buying and purchasing as here applied, let it be observed that *buying* is often used metaphorically in Scripture, where it is common to meet with buying without money and without price, or buying with a price improperly so called, Isai. lv. 1. In this sense we buy, when we seriously apply our minds to study and receive the precepts of divine wisdom and the promises of divine grace, and endeavor to have our hearts and lives conformed to them. Thus we buy the truth, Prov. xxiii. 23. And in this sense we sell, when through carelessness we fall into a course of sin, or through obstinacy continue in it. Thus we may sell the truth, instead of buying it, Prov. xxiii. 23. Thus Ahab did sell himself to work wickedness, 1 Kings xxi. 25; and thus the Jew in the flesh was carnal and sold under sin, Rom. vii. 14.

And the most high God is also in Scripture said to buy and sell with respect to his creatures. He *buyeth* a people, when he interposes in their favor and employs all proper means to free them from suffering or any circumstances of wretchedness and to raise them to a happy and prosperous state. So he purchased, or bought, the children of Israel, by bringing them out of the slavery of Egypt to the liberty and privileges of Canaan by his mighty power, wisdom and goodness; which may be considered as the price, improperly so called, for which he bought them. On the other hand, he *sells* a people, when he withdraws his favor and blessing, suffers their enemies to prevail or calamity and ruin to fall upon them, Judg. ii. 14.

And this notion of buying, or purchasing, is in the New Testament very properly applied to our salvation by Jesus Christ; and therefore should be well considered and understood.

4. And as he brought them out of the most abject slavery and advanced them to a new and happy state of being, attended with distinguishing privileges, enjoyments and marks of honor, he is said, 1. to *create*, *make*, and *form* them, Isai. xliii. 1, Deut. xxxii. 6; 2. to give them *life*, Ezek. xvi. 6; 3. to have *begotten* them, Deut. xxxii. 18.

Thus, as God created the whole body of the Jews and made them to live, they received a being or existence, Isai. lxiii. 19.

5. As he made them live and begat them, 1. he sustains the character of a *father*, Jerem. xxxi. 9; and 2. they are his *children*, Deut. xiv. 1; his *sons* and *daughters*, which were *born* to him, Isai. xliii. 6.

6. And as the whole body of the Jews were the children of one Father, even of God, this naturally established among themselves the mutual and endearing relation of *brethren* (including that of *sisters*); and they were obliged to consider and to deal with each other accordingly, Deut. xv. 7.

7. And the relation of God as a father to the Jewish nation as his children will lead our thoughts to a clear idea of their being, as they are frequently called, the *house*, or family, of God, Numb. xii. 7.

8. Further; the Scripture directs us to consider the land of Canaan as the estate, or *inheritance*, belonging to this house or family, Deut. xxi. 23.

Here it may not be improper to take notice that the land of Canaan, in reference to their trials, wanderings and fatigues in the wilderness, is represented as their *rest*, Psal. xcv. 11.

9. Thus the Israelites were the house, or family, of God. Or we may conceive them formed into a *nation*,

Exod. xix. 6, having the Lord, Jehovah, the true God, at their head; who on this account is styled their *God*, Exod. vi. 7, Governor, Protector, or *King*, 1. Sam. xii. 12; and they his *people*, 2. Sam. vii. 24, subjects, or *servants*, Levit. xxv. 55.

10. And it is in reference to their being a society peculiarly appropriated to God and under his special protection and government, that they are sometimes called *the city*, the *holy city*, the *city* of the Lord, of God, Isai. xlvi. 2, Psal. ci. 8, xli. 4.

Hence the whole community, or church, is denoted by the city *Jerusalem*, and sometimes by *Zion*, *Mount Zion*, the city of David, Isai. lxi. 19, Joel ii. 32.

Hence also they are said to be *written*, or enrolled, in the *book* of God, as being citizens invested in the privileges and immunities of his kingdom, Ezek. xlii. 9, Exod. xxxii. 32.

And it deserves our notice, that as the other nations of the world did not belong to this city, commonwealth, or kingdom of God, and so were not his subjects and people in the same peculiar sense as the Jews, for these reasons are they frequently represented as *strangers*, *aliens*, Deut. xiv. 21, Isai. lxi. 5, and as being *not a people*, Deut. xxxii. 21. And as they served other gods and were generally corrupt in their morals, they have the character of *enemies*, Psal. lxxiv. 4. [So in N. T.] Rom. v. 10, Col. i. 21.

11. The kind and particular regards of God for the Israelites and their special relation to him is also signified by that of a *husband* and *wife*, Jerem. xxxi. 32; and his making a covenant with them to be their God: is called *espousals*, Jerem. ii. 2, iii. 14.

Hence it is that the Jewish church, or community, is represented as a *mother*, Isai l. 1; and particular members as her *children*, Isai. xlix. 17.

Hence also from the notion of the Jewish church being a wife to God her Husband, her idolatry, or worshipping of strange gods, comes under the name of *adultery*, Jerem. iii. 9, and *whoredom*, Ezek. xxiii. 43.

12. As God exercised a singular providence over them in supplying, guiding and protecting them, he was their *Shepherd*, Psal. lxxx. 1; and they his *flock*, his *sheep*, Psal. lxxix. 13, Ezek. xxxiv.

13. Upon nearly the same account, as God established them, provided proper means for their happiness and improvement in knowledge and virtue, they are compared to a *vine* and a *vineyard*, and God to the *husbandman* who *planted* and dressed it, Psal. lxxx, Isai. v. 1-7; and particular members of the community are compared to *branches*, Isai. xxvii. 10. [So in N. T.] Rom. xi. 17-24.

14. As they were by the will of God set apart and appropriated in a special manner to his honor and obedience and furnished with extraordinary means and motives to holiness, so God is said to *sanctify*, or *hallow*, them, Exod. xxxi. 13, Levit. xxii. 32.

In the same sense I conceive they are said to be *washed*, Ezek. xvi. 9.

And because other nations did not enjoy the same extraordinary means and were generally involved in vice and idolatry, therefore they are represented as *unclean*, Isai. lii. 1. [So in N. T.] Acts x. 28.

15. Hence it is that they are styled a *holy* nation, or people, Exod. xix. 6, and *saints*, Psal. cxlviii. 14.

16. Further; by his presence among them and their being consecrated to him they were made his *house* or building, the *sanctuary* which he *built*, Psal. cxiv. 2, Isai. lvi. 5, Jerem. xxxiii. 7; and this is implied by his *dwelling* and *walking* amongst them, Exod. xxix. 45, Levit. xxvi. 12. Hence we may gather that *dwell* in such places imports to *reign*, and may be applied figuratively to whatever governs in our hearts, [as in N. T.] Rom. vii. 17, viii. 11.

17. And not only did God as their King dwell among them as in his house, temple, or palace, but he also conferred upon them the honor of *kings*, as he redeemed them from servitude, made them lords of themselves, and raised them *above* other nations to *reign* over them; and of *priests* too, as they were to attend upon God from time to time continually in the solemn offices of religion which he had appointed, Exod. xix. 6, Deut. xxvi. 19, xv. 6.

18. Thus the whole body of the Jewish nation were *separated* unto God, 1 Kings, viii. 53; and as they were more nearly related to him than any other people, as they were joined to him in covenant, had free access to him in the ordinances of worship, and in virtue of his promise had a particular title to his regards and blessing, he is said to be *near* unto them, and they unto him, Deut. iv. 7, Psal. cxlviii. 14.

And here I may observe, that as the Gentiles were not then taken into the same peculiar covenant with the Jews, nor stood in the same special relation to God, nor enjoyed their extraordinary religious privileges, but lay out of the commonwealth of Israel, they are on the other hand said to be *far off*, Zech. vi. 15.

19. And as God had in all these respects distinguished them from all other nations and sequestered them unto himself, they are styled his *peculiar people*, Deut. xxvi. 18.

20. As they were a body of men particularly related to God, instructed by him in the rules of wisdom, devoted to his service, and employed in his true worship, they are called his *congregation*, or *church*, 1 Chron. xxviii. 8.

21. For the same reason they are considered as God's possession, *inheritance*, or *heritage*, Deut. ix. 26, Jerem. xii. 7.

From all this it appears, that the Jews, or the Israelites, were happy and highly exalted in civil, but especially in spiritual, privileges above all other people; and those of them who best understood the nature of their constitution were deeply sensible of this, Deut. iv, Psal. lxxxix.

And it was the duty of the whole body of this people to *rejoice* in the goodness of God, Deut. xxvi. 11, to *thank*, Psal. l. 14, and *praise*, Psal. cv. 45, and *bless* him, Psal. cxxxv. 19, for all the benefits bestowed upon them.

Whether I have ranged the foregoing particulars in proper order, or given an exact account of each, let the studious of scripture knowledge consider. What ought to be specially observed is this, that all the forementioned privileges, benefits, relations, and honors did belong to *all* the children of Israel without exception. The Lord Jehovah was the God, King, Saviour, Father, Husband, Shepherd, &c. to them *all*. He saved, bought, redeemed; he created, he begot, he made, he planted,

&c. them *all*. And they were *all* his people, nation, heritage, his children, spouse, flock, vineyard, &c. They *all* had a right to the ordinances of worship, to the promises of God's blessing, and especially to the promise of the land of Canaan. All enjoyed the protection and special favors of God in the wilderness till they had forfeited them; all eat of the manna, and all drank of the water out of the rock, &c. That these privileges and benefits belonged to the whole body of the Israelitish nation is evident from all the texts I have already quoted; which he who observes carefully will find do all of them speak of the whole nation, the whole community, without exception.

And that all these privileges, honors, and advantages were common to the whole nation is confirmed by this ~~another~~ consideration, that they were the effect of God's free grace without regard to any prior *righteousness* of theirs, Deut. ix. 6; and therefore they are assigned to God's *love* as the spring whence they flowed, and the donation of those benefits is expressed by God's *loving* them, Deut. vii. 7, 8; they are also assigned to God's *mercy*, and the bestowing of them is expressed by his *showing* them *mercy*, Exod. xv. 13.

It is on account of this general love to the Israelites that they are honored with the title of *beloved*, Jerem. xi. 15.

In these texts and others of the same kind it is evident the love and mercy of God hath respect not to particular persons among the Jews but to the whole nation, and therefore is to be understood of that general love and mercy whereby he singled them out to be a peculiar nation to himself, favored with extraordinary blessings.'

PECULIAR LANGUAGE APPLIED TO CHRISTIANS IN THE
BIBLE.

[From Taylor's Key to the Apostolic Writings.]

This article should be read in connexion with the last. It will then be apparent how much of the language of the New Testament was drawn from the Old.

—
‘The state, membership, privileges, honors, and relations of professed Christians, particularly of believing Gentiles, are expressed by the same phrases with those of the ancient Jewish church; and therefore, unless we admit a very strange abuse of words, must convey the same general ideas of our present state, membership, privileges, honors, and relations to God, as we are professed Christians. For instance:

1. As God *chose* his ancient people the Jews and they were his *chosen* and *elect*, so now the whole body of Christians, Gentiles as well as Jews, are admitted to the same honor; as they are selected from the rest of the world, and taken into the kingdom of God for the knowledge, worship and obedience of God in hopes of eternal life, Ephes. i. 4, 1 Pet. ii. 9, Tit. i. 1.

2. The first step the goodness of God took in execution of his purpose of election with regard to the Gentile world was, to rescue them from their wretched situation in the sin and idolatry of their heathen state and to bring them into the light and privileges of the gospel. With regard to which the language of Scripture is 1. that he *delivered*, Coloss, i. 13; 2. *saved*, 2 Tim. i. 9.

3. *bought or purchased*, 1 Cor. vi. 20, Acts xx. 28 ;*
 4. *redeemed* them, 1 Pet. i. 18. In this general sense *saved* is in other places applied to both Jews and Gentiles, particularly to the Jews, Rom. x. 1. Hence God is styled our *Saviour*, Tit. iii. 4. And as this salvation is by Jesus Christ, he also is frequently called our *Saviour*. Hence frequent mention is made of the *redemption* which is in Jesus Christ, Rom. iii. 24. Hence also Christ is said to give himself a *ransom* for us, Matt. xx. 28.

3. As God sent the gospel to bring Gentile Christians out of Heathenism and invited and made them welcome to the honors and privileges of his people, he is said to *call* them, and they are his *called*, 1 Thess. ii. 12, Rom. viii. 28.

The Jews also were called, Rom. ix. 24. But the calling of the Jews must be different from that of the Gentiles. The Gentiles were called into the kingdom of God as strangers and foreigners, who had never been in it before. But the Jews then were subjects of God's kingdom under the old form; and therefore could be called only to submit to it as it was new modelled under the Messiah. Or they were called to repentance, to the faith, allegiance and obedience of the Son of God, and to the hope of eternal life through him; whom rejecting, they were cast out of God's peculiar kingdom.

* How *buying* is to be understood in a moral, figurative sense, see the note [on page 207.] Christ bought us, as he did with much labor and suffering what was in its own nature proper to free us from ignorance and sin and to purify us into a peculiar people fitted for eternal happiness, and as what he did was with respect to God, the Lawgiver and Judge, a proper ground and reason for pardoning sin and conferring all other blessings.

4. As God formed believing Jews and Gentiles into one body and as he brought the Gentiles out of darkness and idolatry into a new and happy state of existence, he is said, 1. to *create* and *make* them, and they are his *work* and *workmanship*, Ephes. ii. 10, 15, Rom. xiv. 20; 2. to *quicken* them, or to give them *life*, Coloss. ii. 13; 3. to have *begotten*, or *regenerated* them, Jam. i. 18, 1 Pet. i. 3.

Thus, as God has created us Christians and made us live, we have received a new being or existence, 2 Cor. v. 17.

5. Hence, as he made Christians live and begat them, especially the believing Gentiles, by bringing them into a new and happy state of being, 1. he sustains the character of a *father*, 2 Thess. ii. 16; and 2. they are his *children*, his *sons* and *daughters*, which were *born* to him, Rom. viii. 16, 2 Cor. vi. 18, 1 John v. 4.

6. And as the whole body of Christians are the children of one Father, even of God, this naturally establisheth among themselves the mutual and endearing relation of *brethren* and *sisters*, and they are obliged to regard and love each other accordingly, Acts xv. 36, Jam. ii. 15.

And as we stand in the relation of children to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, hence it is that we are his *brethren* and he is considered as the *first-born* among us, John xx. 17, Rom. viii. 29.

7. And the relation of God as a father to us Christians who are his children will lead our thoughts to a clear idea of our being, as we are called, the *house*, or *family*, of God, or of Christ, 1 Tim. iii. 15, Heb. iii. 6, Ephes. iii. 15.

8. Further ; as the land of Canaan was the estate, or inheritance, belonging to the Jewish family, or house, so the heavenly country is given to the Christian house, or family, for their *inheritance*, 1 Pet. i. 4. Hence we have the title of *heirs*, Tit. iii. 7.

And as Canaan was considered as the rest of the Jews, so, in reference to our trials and afflictions in this world, heaven is considered as the *rest* of Christians, 2 Thess. i. 7.

9. Thus Christians as well as the ancient Jews are the house, or family, of God ; or we may conceive the whole body of Christians formed into a *nation*, 1 Pet. ii. 9, having God at their head, who on this account is styled *our God*, Governor, Protector, or King, 1 Cor. vi. 11 ; and we his *people*, subjects, or *servants*, 2 Cor. vi. 16, Rom. vi. 22.

And as God has constituted Jesus Christ the head, king, and governor of the church, so he is frequently styled *our Lord*, Rom. i. 3, and we his *servants*, Rev. i. 1.

10. And it is in reference to our being a society peculiarly appropriated to God and under his special protection and government, that we are called the *city* of God ; Heb. xii. 22, the *holy city*, Rev. xi. 2.

Hence the whole Christian community, or church, is denoted by the city *Jerusalem*, Galat. iv. 26, and sometimes by *Mount Zion*, Heb. xii. 22. In her reformed, or future happy, state she is the *New Jerusalem*, Rev. iii. 12.

Hence also we are said to be *written*, or enrolled, in the *book* of God, or which comes to the same thing, of the Lamb, the Son of God, Rev. iii. 5.

And whereas the believing Gentiles were once *strangers, aliens, not a people, enemies*, now they 'are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints,' Ephes. ii. 19, 1 Pet. ii. 10; now we are at peace with God, Rom. v. 1, and reconciled, 2 Cor. v. 18.

On the other hand, the body of the Jewish nation (having through unbelief rejected the Messiah and the gospel, and being therefore cast out of the city and kingdom of God,) are in their turn at present represented under the name and notion of *enemies*, Rom. xi. 28.

11. The kind and particular regards of God to the converted Gentiles and their relation to Jesus Christ is also signified by that of a *husband and wife*, and his taking them into his covenant is represented by his *espousing* them, 2 Cor. xi. 2, Ephes. v. 22-32.

Hence the Christian church or community is represented as a *mother*, and particular members as her *children*, Galat. iv. 26, 31.

Hence also from the notion of the Christian church being the spouse of God in Christ, her corruption and idolatry come under the name of *fornication* and *adultery*, Rev. ii. 20, 22.

12. As God by Christ exercises a particular providence over the Christian church in supplying them with all spiritual blessings, guiding them through all difficulties and guarding them in all spiritual dangers, he is their *shepherd*, and they his *flock*, his *sheep*, John x. 11, 16, 1 Pet. ii. 25, v. 2.

13. Nearly on the same account, as God by Christ has established the Christian church and provided all means for our happiness and improvement in knowledge and virtue, we are compared to a *vine* and a *vineyard*,

and God to the *husbandman* who *planted* and dresseth it, and particular members of the community are compared to *branches*, John xv. 1-6, 1 Cor. iii. 9.

14. As Christians are by the will of God set apart and appropriated in a special manner to his honor, service and obedience, and furnished with extraordinary means and motives to holiness, so they are said to be *sanctified*, Jude 1.

In the same sense, I apprehend, Christians are said to be *washed*, 1 Cor. vi. 11.

And as the believing Gentiles before they were thus washed were accounted unclean, it is for this reason the children of Christians are declared not to be *unclean*, 1 Cor. vii. 14.

15. Hence it is that Christians are styled *holy*, Coloss. iii. 12, *holy* brethren, Heb. iii. 1, a *holy* nation, 1. Pet. ii. 9, and *saints*, 2 Cor. i. 1.

16. Further ; by the presence of God in the Christian church and our being by profession consecrated to him, we as well as the ancient Jews are made his *house*, 1 Pet. ii. 5, or *temple*, Ephes. ii. 21, which God has *built*, 1 Cor. iii. 9, and in which he *dwells*, or *walks*, 2 Cor. vi. 16.

17. And not only doth God as our King dwell in the Christian church as in his house or temple, but he has also conferred on Christians the honors of *kings*, Rev. i. 6, as he has redeemed us from the servitude of sin, made us lords of ourselves, and raised us *above* others, Rev. ii. 26, to sit on *thrones*, Rev. iii. 21, and to *judge*, 1 Cor. vi. 2, and *reign* over them, 2 Tim. ii. 12. And he has made us *priests* too, as we are peculiarly consecrated to God, and obliged to attend upon him from

time to time continually in the solemn offices of religion which he has appointed, 1. Pet. ii. 5.

18. Thus the whole body of the Christian church is *separated* unto God from the rest of the world, 2 Cor. vi. 17. And whereas before the Gentile believers were *afar off*, lying out of the commonwealth of Israel; now they are *nigh*, as they are joined to God in covenant, have free access to him in the ordinances of worship, and in virtue of his promise a particular title to his regards and blessing, Ephes. ii. 13.

19. And as God in all these respects has distinguished the Christian church and sequestered them unto himself, they are styled his *peculiar people*, Tit. ii. 14.

20. As Christians are a body of men particularly related to God, instructed by him in the rules of wisdom, devoted to his service and employed in his true worship, they are called his *church* or congregation, 1 Cor. x. 32, and particular societies are *churches*, Rom. xvi. 16.

21. For the same reason they are considered as God's possession or *heritage*, 1 Pet. v. 3.*

From the above-recited particulars it appears, that the Christian church is happy, and highly honored with privileges of the most excellent nature; which the Apostles, who well understood this new constitution, were deeply sensible of, Ephes. i. 3.

* The reader cannot well avoid observing that the words and phrases by which our Christian privileges are expressed in the New Testament, are the very same with the words and phrases by which the privileges of the Jewish church are expressed in the Old Testament.

And it is the duty of the whole body of Christians to *rejoice* in the goodness of God, Philipp. iv. 4, to *thank* and *praise* him for all the benefits conferred upon them in the gospel, Coloss. ii. 7, Heb. xiii. 15.

Further it is to be observed, that all the foregoing privileges, benefits, relations, and honors belong to *all* professed Christians without exception. God is the God, King, Saviour, Father, Husband, Shepherd, &c. to them *all*. He created, saved, bought, redeemed, he begot, he made, he planted, &c. them *all*. And they are *all*, as created, redeemed and begotten by him, his people, nation, heritage, his children, spouse, flock, vineyard, &c. We are all enriched with the blessings of the gospel, Rom. xi. 12; all reconciled to God, Rom. xi. 15; all the 'seed of Abraham and heirs according to the promise,' Galat. iii. 29; all the brethren of Christ and members of his body; all are under grace; all have a right to the ordinances of worship. Either every professed Christian is not in the church, or all the fore-mentioned privileges belong to every professed Christian. Which will appear more evidently if we consider,

That all the forementioned privileges, honors and advantages are the effects of God's free grace, without regard to any prior *righteousness* which deserved or procured the donation of them; accordingly they are always in Scripture assigned to the *love, grace,** and *mercy* of God as the sole spring whence they flow, John iii. 16, Ephes. ii. 4-10, Tit. iii. 4-7.

* Hence 'grace,' and the 'grace of God,' is sometimes put for the whole gospel and all its blessings, Acts xiii. 43, 2 Cor. vi. 1.

It is on account of this general love that Christians are honored with the title of *beloved*, Rom. i. 7.

In these texts and others of the same kind it is evident, the love, grace and mercy of God have respect not to particular persons in the Christian church, but to the whole body, or whole societies; and therefore are to be understood of that general love, grace and mercy whereby the whole body of Christians is separated unto God, to be his peculiar people favored with extraordinary blessings.'

IMPROPER QUOTATION OF SCRIPTURE.

It might be expected that where the Bible was the text book of a people's faith, read by or to all classes, and daily studied by thousands, it would be much quoted both in writing and in conversation. It might be expected too, that it would often be quoted in a manner to gratify neither good taste nor humble piety. We every day hear the language of Scripture perverted. Sometimes it is used to 'point a jest,' sometimes to rivet an argument on the conscience of an opponent without regard to the propriety of the citation, and sometimes to display acquaintance with a book held in such general respect. Many persons fall into an improper use of it, they know not how, — not from any wrong intention; but having formed the habit, they continue in it because they do not feel the importance or because they dislike the trouble of breaking it off. A few hints on this subject may be permitted.

To begin with the worst use that can be made of Scripture, its language is borrowed by the profane to give a zest to the conversation which lacks wit, or to relieve the insipidities of profligacy. As the effect must depend wholly on the associations that exist in the mind of the speaker or hearer, this is bold impiety. It is wilfully taking the fire of heaven to kindle the flames of wickedness. It indicates great progress in depravity. But, like other sinful habits, it must have had a beginning in some less offensive indulgence. Early care of parents and more discrimination in the choice of associates might have prevented a practice destructive to every sentiment of religion.

Far less dreadful, either as a sign or a cause of inward depravity, is that light use of scriptural expressions which betrays however an insensibility to some of the most familiar laws of the mind. To provoke merriment by a quaint quotation from this volume may not discover hostility to its truths, but it is a sure way of begetting indifference. Men seldom read with a serious interest the pages which have supplied food for their pleasantries or gratified their love of humor. I have often seen a smile pass over the countenances particularly of the young at what has been considered an apt quotation of Scripture, when I have feared that the pleasure of the moment was bought at the expense of permanent injury, and that he who had implanted a mischievous association should have preferred even the reputation of stupidity.

The Bible is used as a storehouse of illustrations, when no purpose is entertained of exciting amusement. Even this practice has its evils. There is a sense in which the Bible may be made too common; while on

the other hand there is a sanctity which may be allowed to rest upon its contents without restraining the freedom of criticism or interpretation. It should not be treated as a classic from which the orator or the fine writer may draw the embellishments of discourse. This is profane pedantry. Any one who remembers some of the speeches which have been made in Congress, or who has read many of the articles in the principal British Reviews, will understand what I mean to condemn.

It has been said that clergymen are notorious for the introduction of scriptural language into familiar and light conversation. It is a fault to which they are exposed by the nature of their pursuits. As they make the Bible their daily study, they may insensibly acquire the habit of expressing their thoughts in its peculiar phraseology, and may be ignorant alike of the existence and of the bad effects of the practice. But it should be particularly avoided by them; for others take courage from their example, and are apt to say,—if ministers may make us laugh by quoting Scripture we need not be very scrupulous in our use of it. However innocent may be the intention, and however unconscious the individual may be of the harm he is doing, I suspect a clergyman never allows himself to repeat the words of Scripture when their evident incongruity to the occasion must either displease or amuse his auditors, without impairing their respect for him or their reverence for the book on which he is most anxious to fasten their faith and love.

Unbelievers in the authority of the Bible, infidels and atheists, are distinguished by the readiness with

which they cite passages from every part of this volume. It shows that they have studied it; but studied it only to find on what they may hang an objection or where they may attach a sneer. They have been diligent but prejudiced readers,—readers of the letter, beneath which they refuse to search for the spirit which is the truth. Hence one who understands the principles of interpretation that should be applied to the Bible is not perplexed by their sophistry, while he who knows only the words that are written down will often be puzzled and discomfited. That the Christian may meet such men on the terms of advantage which his better cause gives him, he must be equally familiar with the language and better taught in the explanation of the Scriptures.

In religious controversy Scripture is often used in an improper manner. A passage may be quoted unfairly. A part and not the whole may be given, or the sense which the connexion determines to be the true one may be disregarded, while it may be made in its detached form to support a sense which the writer never intended. This is criminal. It is subornation of false witnesses. Yet it is one of the most common artifices in theological disputation. A text if touched should be taken fairly and fully. It should not be broken off from everything on which it depends for its meaning. Texts of Scripture are not, like the fragments of Grecian architecture, so perfect and unchangeable in their characters, that they declare at once what place they held in the structure from which they have been torn. It is not easy to see how an honest man who is careful can do the injustice to Prophets and Apostles, of

which the pages of controversial and dogmatic theology are full.

Passages are also cited unfairly, when they are turned to a purpose foreign from their original design, yet so artfully that the common reader would not discover the deception. When a writer adduces a text in support of a theory or an argument which it may seem to favor, but to which he knows it does not when properly explained afford any support, he is guilty of practising on the ignorance of others. If, for example, he believes that the use of the plural pronoun in the 26th verse of the first chapter of Genesis — ‘Let us make man in our image’ is only an example of the idiom which expressed dignity by the plural number, he does wrong in bringing it as a proof of a tri-personal distinction in the Deity. When too one is persuaded that a passage is incorrectly translated, he ought not to repeat the words of the translation as authority. A perfectly honest use of the sacred writings is one of the great wants of the Christian world. It would narrow the limits of controversy and extinguish a thousand ungenerous feelings.

These hints may bring to mind other modes of misapplying Scripture. The Bible should be read and quoted; but not for bad or foolish purposes. Its expressions should represent and embody the most sacred sentiments and emotions of our souls. We may draw from it the language of prayer, of exhortation, of sympathy, of earnest and serious discussion, but it should not be used to promote our amusement or to defend our prejudices. Reverence unpolluted by superstition, faith that forbids not full independence of mind, and honesty that prefers truth to victory, are the conditions of a proper use of its language,

THE TITLES, ITALICKS, AND POINTS OF THE COMMON
VERSION.

It is important that the reader of the Scriptures should understand precisely what is 'holy writ,' and should as far as possible exercise his own judgment upon its meaning. Comparatively few can inspect the originals, and most persons must therefore rely on the fidelity of the translation which they use. They should avail themselves of whatever means lie within reach for lessening the disadvantage under which they are placed by a want of acquaintance with the ancient languages. There are two or three circumstances connected with the form of the translation, of which if they are apprised they may often act the part of critics with good effect.

It has already been said in these pages, that the division of the Bible into chapters and verses is of modern date and of no authority. Of course the titles of the chapters deserve no regard. They express what the persons who prepared them thought was the subject or purpose of the several portions; on which other readers are as competent to form an opinion as were they. They may generally have been right, but without doubt were sometimes wrong. To all the chapters in 'Solomon's Song' are prefixed arguments, as they are called in classical books, explaining this nuptial song as a description of the mutual love of Christ and the church.*

* The copy of the Bible which I have before me is one of a 12mo. stereotype edition, published by the American Bible Society. The Managers ought better to redeem the pledge which they have at least virtually given, to distribute the Bible without note or comment. Yet it should be added, that the ample summaries prefixed to the chapters in this edition in general exhibit accuracy and impartiality.

Here exposition is introduced, where it is manifestly improper, if it be not grossly erroneous. We therefore should not allow any weight to these titles, much less confound them with the text, as if they proceeded from the same source and were worthy of the same respect. — The titles of the books, and the subscriptions to the Epistles of Paul, though they have a far higher antiquity, are entitled to as little consideration.

Again; the words printed in italicks were inserted by the translators to complete or elucidate the sense. It was not only justifiable but necessary for them to supply words where the idiom of our language forbade such an omission as they found in the original. But they were liable to err here as in every other part of their work; and by putting the supplementary words in a different type from the rest they enable us to discover, with only the English Bible before us, that they exercised this privilege both needlessly and injuriously. I will quote a single example of each fault. In John viii. 6 we read, that ‘Jesus stooped down and with his finger wrote on the ground, *as though he heard them not.*’ This last clause is a comment of the translators, as the Evangelist concluded the sentence at the word ‘ground.’ In 1 John iii. 16 we read, ‘Hereby perceive we the love *of God*, because he laid down his life for us.’ The words, ‘of God,’ were inserted by the translators without the least authority, and the passage is thus made to inculcate a doctrine on which the original is silent. Let the reader therefore notice the words in italick letters, and wherever he finds that as good or better sense could be obtained by their erasure, let him disregard them.

Again ; the punctuation of the translators is entitled to no regard. If the original penmen used any pauses, their system was different from ours and is unknown to us. In the oldest manuscripts the letters are of uniform size and the words are written without spaces of separation. If therefore we can render a passage more clear by altering the punctuation, we should not be deterred by any reverence for the present points, as though they had been made by the finger of inspiration. In many instances they are palpably wrong. To cite the first example that occurs to me, the 19th and 20th verses of the third chapter of Acts are in sense closely connected and should have, if any point, only a comma between them. In the Epistles a better punctuation would remove the obscurity which hangs over many passages. The use of a note of interrogation would often solve apparent difficulties, and in other places bring out a much more clear or beautiful sense than is now presented ; as in John xii. 27, by giving the interrogative form to the words, ' Father, save me from this hour,' all cause of perplexity is removed.

We need not charge dishonesty upon the translators because we think that by each of these methods they have in many instances misrepresented the meaning of the writers. They were fallible men, and in so great a work might be expected to make mistakes even if they had exercised the utmost care and fairness. Let the reader but understand and bear in mind the facts, that the titles, the italick words, and the points do not belong to the original Scriptures, and he will protect himself against any unjust influence which they might have upon his mind.

TRANSLATION AND EXPOSITION.

MATTHEW VIII. 1—17.

Miraculous cures wrought by Jesus.

- 1 When he came down from the mountain great
2 crowds followed him. And lo, a leper came and
3 prostrated himself before him, saying, Sir, if thou
4 will, thou canst cleanse me. And Jesus extending
5 his hand touched him, saying, I will, be thou cleans-
6 ed. And his leprosy was immediately cleansed.
7 And Jesus says to him, See that thou tell no one ;
8 but go, show thyself to the priest, and offer the
9 gift which Moses commanded, as an evidence to
10 them.
- 11 When he had entered into Capernaum a centu-
12 rion came to him, beseeching him and saying,
13 Sir, my servant lies at home paralytic, dreadfully
14 afflicted. And Jesus says to him, I will come and
15 heal him. And the centurion said in reply, Sir,
16 I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my
17 roof ; but only speak a word, and my servant will
18 be healed. Though I am a man under authority,
19 having under me soldiers I say to this one, Go,
20 and he goeth, and to another, Come, and he com-
21 eth, and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.
- 22 When Jesus heard this he wondered, and said,
23 I have not found so great faith in Israel. But I
24 say to you, that many will come from the east and

the west and will recline with Abraham and Isaac
 12 and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, but the sons
 of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer
 darkness ; there will be weeping and gnashing of
 13 teeth. And Jesus said to the centurion, Go, and
 as thou hast believed be it unto thee. And his
 servant was healed in that hour.

14 And Jesus having entered Peter's house, saw
 15 his wife's mother lying under a fever. And he
 touched her hand, and the fever left her. And
 she rose and waited on them.

16 And when evening came they brought many
 demoniacs to him ; and he cast out the spirits with
 17 a word, and healed all who were sick. So that
 what was written by Isaiâh the prophet was fulfilled,
 when he said, He took our infirmities and
 bore our diseases.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

V. 1. *The mountain* ; — on which the previous discourse
 had been delivered. See chap. v. 1.

Vs. 2-4. Compare Mark i. 40-45, and Luke v. 12-14.

V. 2. *A leper*. The leprosy of the East is one of the most
 dreadful diseases to which the human body can be subjected.
 It appears on the skin, but affects the whole system, reducing
 the sufferer to a most miserable and offensive condition.
 Its first indication is a small red spot, but as the disease
 proceeds it covers the body with white scales, Numb. xii.
 10, 2 Kings v. 27. It is infectious, and the leper was
 obliged to live apart from his friends, Numb. v. 2, 2 Kings
 xv. 5. Clear and full directions respecting the signs of

leprosy were given by Moses, Levit. xiii. The cure of this disease in its advanced stages was beyond human skill, 2 Kings v. 7, and is said to have been reckoned by the Jews among the gifts of the Messiah.

Prostrated himself. So the word should be translated here, and in many other places, where in the common version it is rendered 'worshipped.' This appears to have been its original meaning, signifying an act expressive of great respect, whence it came to signify worship paid to God, as in Matt. iv. 10. If 'homage' were used in English, as is 'worship,' both as a noun and a verb, and we could say 'he homaged him,' we should be able to give the force of the original in a single word. But now we must either say 'he paid homage, or obeisance,' or 'prostrated himself,' as shall seem most suitable to the connexion.

Sir. So the word is rendered in the common version in other places where, as in this instance, it was used only as a term of respectful address, John iv. 11, 19, xii. 21, xx. 15, Acts xvi. 30. The leper, though he had perfect faith in the miraculous power of Jesus, may not have been persuaded that he was the Messiah.

Cleanse. The leper was pronounced by the Law unclean, see Levit. xiii, and his cure was called his cleansing; and therefore, as this is the literal meaning of the Greek word, I prefer it to 'heal' or 'cure.'

V. 3. *Touched him.* This was not an insignificant act. To touch an unclean person was to incur ceremonial pollution, Levit. v. 3. Jesus thus intimated his confidence in the reality of the miracle.

His leprosy was cleansed. A common figure of speech, by which the disease is put for the diseased person, — 'the accident for the subject.'

V. 4. *See that thou tell no one.* This injunction was often given by Jesus to those on whom he exerted his miraculous power, Matt. ix. 30, xii. 16, Mark vii. 36, viii. 26,

Luke viii. 56. Three reasons may be assigned. 1. That he might not be too much pressed by the sick, and prevented from discharging the other functions of his ministry, Mark i. 45. 2. That the feelings of the people might not be encouraged, who were disposed to proclaim him Messiah and involve him and themselves in the evils of a popular tumult, John, vi. 15. Jesus avoided the open declaration of his office till the close of his life, Matt. xvi. 20, xvii. 9; see also Luke iv. 41. 3. That no disadvantage might arise to the person healed. This, I conceive, was the principal reason in the present case. If the priests had been informed of the circumstances of the cure, their hatred of Jesus might have prompted them to deny its efficacy, and to withhold the declaration without which the leper could not be restored to society. He might even have received such treatment from them as did the man of whom we read in John ix. Jesus therefore directs him to hasten and not to spread any rumour by the way which might anticipate his appearance before the proper authority, who having examined his body would pronounce him clean.

Show thyself to the priest and offer the gift which Moses commanded. Here our Lord showed his respect for the Jewish Law, which was not yet abrogated. The instructions of Moses on this subject may be found in Levit. xiv. *The gift* at this time was two birds, Levit. xiv. 4.

As an evidence to them, i. e. an evidence, or proof, to the people, that you are free from the leprosy. For the priest by receiving the leper's offering certified this fact. This I believe is the meaning, though some commentators prefer to render the words—'a testimony against them,' i. e. a reproof of their unbelief, as in Mark vi. 11, and Luke ix. 5.

Vs. 5-13. Compare Luke vii. 1-10. There is some slight difference between the two Evangelists, and Macknight therefore supposes that they do not speak of the same miracle. But the disagreement is no greater than would

naturally occur between two independent witnesses, each of whom should adopt his own style of narration. Luke is more exact than Matthew; he tells us more about the centurion, and is more careful to describe the manner in which communication passed between him and Jesus. Still one account does not contradict the other. It is not only a legal maxim, but a principle of which we make continual use in conversation,—that what one does through another he may be regarded as having done in his own person. We say that a man built a house or wrote a letter, when we only mean that he dictated the letter and gave directions concerning the building. On the same principle a person may be said to have taken part in a dialogue which he conducted through messengers.

V. 5. *When HE had entered.* This is a preferable reading to that of the received text—‘when Jesus,’ &c.

A centurion. This was the title of an officer in the Roman army who had command of a hundred men. Judea was obliged to receive several, distributed among the cities in which garrisons were maintained; see Matt. xxvii. 54, Acts x. 1, xxi. 32, xxvii. 1. This person was probably attached to Herod’s service, Mark vi. 21. From the mention made of him in Luke vii. 4, 5, it has been commonly supposed that he was a ‘proselyte of the gate,’ that is, a believer in the true God but not an observer of the Jewish ritual.

V. 6. *Sir.* See note on V. 2.

My servant. The word used here and that rendered by the same term in V. 9 are not the same in the original. The Greek word here and in Vs. 8 and 13 is usually translated ‘child,’ which is its proper meaning. It was sometimes applied to servants, of which we have an example in Luke xv. 26; rather however as a term of affection or kindness, as *puer* in Latin, and *boy* among us. In Luke’s account of this miracle it occurs only once, vii. 7; the original in Vs. 2, 3, and 10, being the same which is used by Matthew in V. 9,

and which strictly signifies a slave, one who was the property of his master. But Luke, by speaking of the same individual under both terms, shows us how this in Matthew should be rendered.

Lies. The word expresses the prostration of disease. So in V. 14. Wakefield at first rendered it — ‘laid along.’

At home. Literally, in the house.

Paralytic. Jahn affirms that ‘the palsy of the New Testament is a disease of very wide import,’ and supposes that this person was visited with the ‘cramp, which in Oriental countries is a fearful malady, subjecting the patient to exquisite sufferings and inducing death in a few days.’ This explanation is supported by the original of the word ‘afflicted’ or ‘tormented,’ and by Luke vii. 2 — ‘he was ready to die.’

V. 7. *I will come and heal him.* This is the usual manner of expressing an intention which circumstances may afterwards render it proper to change; as here Jesus did not enter the centurion’s house, because his avowal of faith was rewarded by a more immediate restoration of his servant.

V. 8. *I am not worthy, &c.* This language does not prove that the centurion regarded Jesus as the Messiah or any other than a remarkable person who possessed the gift of miraculous healing, and to whom therefore he probably imputed a high degree of personal sanctity. He knew in what estimation the Jews held the Heathens, and might therefore speak in a more emphatic tone of his own unworthiness. See Acts x. 28.

V. 9. *Though, &c.* I have given the translation of this verse which seems to convey the sense without doing violence to the original. Every one must perceive that in the common version the meaning of the passage is so obscure that its force is lost. In some versions the first clause is rendered — ‘For I, who am a man under authority, have

soldiers under myself'; the relative 'who' being inserted and the participle 'having' of the original being changed into a verb. By considering *γὰρ* and the second *καί* in this verse redundant, as they are both sometimes found, and by rendering the first *καί* 'though,' for which Luke xviii. 7 and John xxi. 23 may be quoted as authority, and by omitting the point after *ἐξουσίαν*, we obtain the translation given in the text, which is adopted by Beausobre and Lenfant and others. The argument of the centurion is this;—If I who am subject to the control of others receive instant obedience from my soldiers and personal attendants (my slaves), how much more must you who own no superior be able to remove the disease with a word.

V. 10. *He wondered.* This is not a very good word, but 'marvelled' is obsolete, and wonder was the feeling which I suppose the Evangelist would impute to Jesus rather than surprise or astonishment or admiration.

I have not found so great faith in Israel. The nature of the faith which Christ here commends appears from the circumstances. It was a faith, or belief, in his miraculous power and superior dignity. This is all that is expressed or intimated by the centurion's language. Jesus declares that he had not found among the Jews an example of such sincere and firm reliance on his divine power as was exhibited by this foreigner.

V. 11. *From the east and the west,* i. e. from every quarter. Such forms of expression were used to describe the whole world; see Luke xiii. 29, Isai. xlv. 6.

Will recline with Abraham—in the kingdom of heaven. The word *recline* expresses the attitude in which the Orientals place themselves at table; see Luke vii. 36—38, John xiii. 23. The happiness of the future life is represented in the New Testament under the image of a feast, Luke xiv. 15, xxii. 30, Rev. xix. 9, because, 1. all our language respecting the spiritual world is borrowed from

the present life, and 2. such description was familiar at that period. The Jews considered themselves entitled to the joys of heaven in preference to the rest of mankind, and imagined that they should there dwell with the fathers of their nation. This state of social delight was vividly presented to their imaginations under the idea of a feast. Jesus adopting this style of expression uses it to clothe a prophecy which at the time he did not mean should be distinctly understood. Those who heard him may have supposed that he was speaking of proselytes to the Jewish faith. But he signified the great truth, which subsequent events unfolded, that his religion should be embraced by multitudes of Heathens. *The kingdom of heaven*, I have before said, was a general expression for the blessings of the Messiah's reign,—including its effects whether on earth or in heaven. The exact meaning of our Lord's words is;—Many from the Pagan world will partake of that happiness of which the Messiah is the source, and which you think will be enjoyed only by the Patriarchs and their posterity.

V. 12. *The sons of the kingdom*; — they who imagine that they have the title of prescription and sole right. It is the same Hebraism which occurs Matt. v. 9; see note in Scrip. Interp. vol. i. p. 149. Compare Matt. xv. 26.

The outer darkness. As the happiness of those who became followers of Christ was described under the image of a feast, which was celebrated in the evening, the loss of this happiness, to which the Jews subjected themselves by their unbelief, is represented as exclusion from the lighted chamber and exposure to the sufferings of cold and hunger in the dark night, as in our Lord's parable, Matt. xxii. 13.

Weeping and gnashing of teeth,—terms suited to the previous description, and meant to indicate the dreadful calamities which the Jews would bring upon themselves by refusing to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah.

Jesus expresses the truths contained in these verses (11 and 12) more plainly in Matt. xxi. 43, Luke xiii. 28, 29.

V. 13. *In that hour.* We find the same expression used once and again to describe an instantaneous effect, Matt. ix. 22, x. 19.

Vs. 14, 15. Compare Mark i. 29—31, Luke iv. 38, 39.

V. 14. *Peter's house.* Peter was a native of Bethsaida, John i. 44, but may have resided after his marriage at Capernaum.

V. 15. *Waited on them,*—served them at table.

Vs. 16, 17. Compare Mark i. 32—34, Luke iv. 40, 41.

V. 16. *When evening came.* The Jews began the day at sunset. The sabbath ended at that time, Levit. xxiii. 32, and as this had been a sabbath, Mark i. 21, the people, who were forbidden every kind of labor, could not bring the sick till the next day began with the evening.

V. 17. *What was written by Isaiah—was fulfilled.* We have here an example of the license which was allowed in quoting from the Old Testament. See note on Matt. iv. 15, 16, in Scrip. Interp. vol. p. 141.* The passage adduced by Matthew is from Isai. liii. 4, and must have been understood in a different sense by the Apostle Peter, 1 Pet. ii. 24. The opinion which prevailed among the Jews, that bodily infirmities were the punishment of sin, John ix. 2, might lead them to interpret or quote the text in either sense, according to the use which they wished to make of it.—It deserves remark, that the words of the Evangelist correspond more nearly with the Hebrew than with the Septuagint, or Greek translation of the Old Testament, which the writers of the New Testament appear generally to have followed.—We perceive in how metaphorical a sense the words 'take' and 'bear' must have been used alike by the Evangelist, the Apostle, and the Prophet. Jesus is said to have taken and borne the diseases of those whom he healed, and the sins of those whom he died to save from sin.

* I refer to my own notes, to avoid the trouble of repetition.

PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. Jesus 'spake with authority' when delivering instruction from the Mount. With not less authority did he speak in the city, when restoring health to the diseased. 'I will; be thou cleansed.' These are the words of one who felt himself intrusted with divine power. They remind us of the manner in which the work of creation is described; — 'God said, Let there be light; and there was light.' The effect justified the tone of the speaker; 'his leprosy was immediately cleansed.' More decisive proof of a divine mission could not have been given.

2. We may remark here what we shall often have occasion to notice, that our Lord's miracles were performed under circumstances which precluded the idea of collusion or imposition. In this section we read of a leper healed in the presence of crowds and then directed to submit himself to the examination of the priest, the nature of the disorder on the one hand and the reality of the cure on the other being thus ascertained by independent and impartial evidence. Next a paralytic, whose danger is certified by unquestionable testimony (Luke vii. 3), is restored while Jesus is at a distance surrounded by the multitude. Then a person suffering under fever is relieved in the presence of select and competent witnesses, (Mark i. 29). Afterwards various cures are wrought upon all who seek Jesus, most of whom must have been strangers to him. On the same day a demoniac is cured in one of the synagogues of the city (Mark i. 23—26), and on the next day a man is restored to life in the midst of a public procession, (Luke vii. 11—15). Such abun-

dance and variety of miraculous operation are irreconcilable with the supposition of imposture.

3. The faith of the centurion was entire, humble, and practical. The faith of the Christian disciple should have the same characteristics. It should be free from doubt, placing full confidence in the divine commission of Jesus. It should be humble, penetrating the soul with a sense of its own unworthiness, and clothing it in lowliness of spirit. It should be practical, bringing him in whom it resides to ask that relief and assistance which Christ is the instrument in bestowing.

4. The conduct of the centurion may instruct Christians in respect to the treatment of their servants. The servant of the Roman officer was 'dear to him,' (Luke vii. 2), and so anxious was he for his recovery that he sent a special message to Jesus by the principal men of the city, entreating him to interpose his miraculous power. Let not Christian masters fall below this example of humanity and true nobleness of character. What a pitiful as well as sinful pride is that which induces any one to think those whom he employs so much beneath him that they do not merit his sympathy. The heads of a household should feel an affectionate interest in all its members, and prove this interest by cheerful acts of kindness.

5. We may be considered at the present time 'the sons of the kingdom.' We have received from our fathers the privileges and promises of revealed truth. But unless we are faithful in that which has been committed to us, we shall be cast out from the inheritance of light into shame and suffering, while others from Pagan lands will rejoice in the portion which we shall have lost.

TRANSLATION AND EXPOSITION.

MATTHEW VIII. 18—34.

Two remarkable miracles wrought by Jesus.

- 18 And Jesus, seeing great crowds around him, gave
19 directions to go to the other side. And a certain
scribe came and said to him, Teacher, I will follow
20 thee whithersoever thou mayst go. And Jesus says
to him, The foxes have holes and the birds of heaven
resting-places, but the Son of man has not where he
21 may lay his head. Another of his disciples said to
him, Master, suffer me first to go and bury my father.
22 But Jesus said to him, Follow me, and let the dead
bury their own dead.
- 23 And when he had entered the vessel, his disciples
24 followed him. And lo, a great tempest arose
on the sea, so that the vessel was covered with
25 the waves; but he slept. And the disciples came to
him and awoke him, saying, Master, save us, we are
26 perishing. And he says to them, Why are ye fear-
ful, ye weak in faith? Then he rose and rebuked
the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.
27 And the men wondered, saying, What a man is this,
that both the winds and the sea obey him.
- 28 And when he had come to the other side into the
territory of the Gergesenes, two demoniacs met him,
coming out of the tombs, very furious, so that no
29 one could pass along that way. And lo, they cried

out, saying, What have we to do with one another, Son of God? Hast thou come hither to torment us
30 before the time? Now at some distance from them
31 a herd of many swine was feeding. And the demons besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, send
32 us into the herd of swine. And he said to them, Go. And having come out, they entered into the swine. And lo, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and perished in the waters.
33 And those who were tending them fled, and going into the city told every thing, about the demoniacs.
34 And lo, the whole city came out to meet Jesus, and when they saw him they besought him to leave their part of the country.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

V. 18. *To go to the other side*, i. e. of the Lake, or Sea, of Tiberias. Capernaum, where Jesus then was (Matt. viii. 5), was situated at the northwestern extremity of the lake, and the territory of the Gergesenes lay on the southeastern shore. It was necessary therefore to pass over nearly the whole length of the lake in going from the one place to the other.

Jesus withdrew himself from the crowd at this time probably because he would not give any occasion of complaint against himself as the author of a popular tumult. In the earlier stages of his ministry when he found that his presence with the multitudes would only excite their unreasonable hopes and might be misrepresented to the civil rulers, he with equal prudence and benevolence dismissed or quitted the people; in this instance crossing the sea, where it would be impossible that many should follow him.

Vs. 19—22. Compare Luke ix. 57—60.

V. 19. The reply of Jesus shows with what views the scribe addressed him. He was disposed to regard him as the Messiah, and thought that by this early expression of faith he should secure a place of honor in that temporal kingdom which he supposed Christ would establish. Jesus perceiving that his ends were selfish informed him that the life which he himself led, and which his followers must expect to lead, was a life of toil and exposure. 'I am a houseless wanderer; my disciple must expect to share the same lot.' This was enough to detach the ambitious scribe from his interests.

V. 20. *Resting-places.* The original is not the Greek word for 'nests.' It might be rendered roosts, or perches. The verb from which this noun is formed is used in Matt. xiii. 32 and Luke xiii. 19,—'the birds come and lodge in the branches.'

The Son of man, i. e. I, Jesus. Different reasons are given for our Lord's choice of this expression to describe himself. In the Old Testament it occurs but seldom except in the book of Ezekiel, where it is continually used to designate the prophet. Daniel (vii. 13) speaks of one whom he saw 'in the night visions, like the Son of man.' In the other instances of its use in the Old Testament it evidently means the same thing as the single word, man. It has been thought by many expositors that our Lord in adopting the term had reference to the passage in Daniel. By some it is considered only emphatic and equivalent to—the man. Some think that it was chosen from humility, and others again esteem it a title of honor. This variety of explanation shows the difficulty of ascertaining the true meaning. A satisfactory examination could not be compressed into a note, but may be given in a separate article at some future time.

V. 21. *Another of his disciples.* We perceive in what

a general sense this word was often used. See John vi. 66. The form of the request—‘suffer me first’—shows that it was made in reply to something that had been said to him. We learn from Luke that Jesus had called him—‘Follow me.’

Bury my father. This expression may be construed in two ways; either—let me see that my father who has just died is properly interred; or—let me return home where I have a father who cannot be expected to live long, and after his death I will join you. The former is the more literal, the latter the more probable meaning. This person may have been in doubt concerning the character of Jesus, and was not ready to espouse his cause, yet was unwilling to give an absolute refusal which might be fatal to his hopes of distinction under the Messiah. He therefore makes an evasive reply, which he may turn to his own advantage whenever circumstances shall dispose him either to deny or to avow adherence to Jesus.

V. 22. *Let the dead bury their own dead.* It is a common rhetorical figure to use the same word in different senses in the same sentence. Some examples occur in Scripture. The present is one of the most remarkable. The servants of sin, in whom religion is not a vital principle, are often described in the New Testament as ‘dead.’ See Ephes. ii. 1, Col. ii. 13, 1 Tim. v. 6; also Rom. vi. 13, Luke xv. 24. Profane writers both in prose and poetry use the word to describe those who are sunk in sensuality. Such is the meaning in its first occurrence in this sentence. ‘Let them who are insensible to the spiritual principles of truth, (the truth which Jesus taught,) attend to the burial of those who live and die in a similar state of insensibility, (*their own dead*’). Follow thou me; I have other duties for you to perform.’—Our Lord’s answer will not appear harsh, if we consider that it was his purpose to establish a new religion, which would

call his immediate followers to sacrifice many of the feelings as well as the habits of their former life. See Luke ix. 60.

Vs. 23—27. Compare Mark iv. 35—41 and Luke viii. 22—25.

V. 23. *His disciples followed him.* Mark says,—‘there were also with him other little ships.’

V. 24. *A great tempest arose.* This was evidently a hurricane or a storm of that nature. Mark calls it ‘a great storm of wind.’ The Lake of Tiberias was subject to violent gusts of wind. See John vi. 18.

He slept. Jesus needed rest after the fatigue of the day. He had been employed in teaching and healing till his strength must have been exhausted, it was now night, (Matt. viii. 16, Mark iv. 35), and he sank to sleep, not that the miracle which ensued might seem more remarkable, but because his bodily powers demanded repose.

V. 26. *Rebuked.* Observe a like rhetorical use of the word in Psalm cvi. 9.

A great calm. It is not a repetition in Mark, to say that ‘the wind ceased and there was a great calm.’ When the sea has been violently agitated the waves do not at once subside, but retain the effects of the storm for some time after the wind has gone down. The instantaneous tranquillity of the lake was therefore a distinct proof that a miraculous power had been exerted.

V. 27. *What a man.* The abrupt expression of surprise is better conveyed in these than in more words. In the original the adjective only is used; as if the disciples had exclaimed, ‘how great is he.’—They were especially impressed by this miracle, as it was the first in which the elements had been subjected to the power of Jesus. The control of these has always been esteemed the prerogative of divinity. See Psalm lxxv. 7.

Vs. 28—34. Compare Mark v. 1—20 and Luke viii. 26—39. There is some difference in the accounts of the Evan-

gelists. Matthew says *the territory of the Gergesenes*, but Mark and Luke—‘of the Gadarenes.’ Gadara was a city of considerable importance which lay to the east or south-east of the sea of Tiberias. Gergesa was a place of less note in the same part of the country. The region in the neighborhood of each, extending as far as the lake, may have been indiscriminately called after the name of the one or the other city.—Matthew speaks of two demoniacs, Mark and Luke mention only one. Probably one was more furious or was better known than the other. Such an omission is not a contradiction between the narrators, but these slight variations rather prove both the truth of the story and the independence of the writers.—Matthew is more brief in his account of this miracle than either Mark or Luke.

V. 28. *Coming out of the tombs.* Tombs in the East were generally built outside of cities, and this custom was particularly observed among the Jews from fear of ceremonial defilement. They often consisted of several apartments either subterranean or hewn out of the living rock, and were the resort of robbers and in time of danger of a better class of people.

V. 29. *What have we to do with one another.* The verbal rendering of the original would be—‘what to us and thee,’ i. e. what have we in common; our paths are separate. Frequent examples of the same construction occur in the Old Testament; See Judges xi. 12, 2 Sam. xvi. 10, 1 Kings xvii. 18, 2 Kings ix. 18, 2 Chron. xxxv. 21, Ezra iv. 3. See also John ii. 4.

The word ‘Jesus’ is omitted here by the best manuscripts, but it is found in Mark and Luke.

Son of God. The meaning of this title may be the subject of a separate article. It is found only once in the Old Testament, Dan. iii. 25. The examples of its recurrence in the New Testament show that in the time of

Jesus it was one of the terms in common use to describe the Messiah, and that it was so used by our Lord. It was taken in this sense by the demoniacs.

To torment us before the time. The notion prevailed among the Jews, that at the day of judgment evil spirits would be consigned to their final punishment, (see 2 Pet. ii. 4, Jude 6,) but that previously they might be subjected to confinement or suffering by beings of superior power. In the apocryphal book of Tobit, viii. 3, we are told, that when the evil spirit smelled the charm used by Tobias under direction of the angel, 'he fled into the utmost parts of Egypt, and the angel bound him.'

V. 30. *A herd of many swine.* Mark says—'they were about two thousand.'—The 'territory of the Gadarenes' was inhabited by a mixed population of Heathens and Jews. Josephus remarks that 'as to Gaza, and Gadara, and Hippos, they were Grecian cities, which Cæsar separated from the government of Archelaus and added to the province of Syria.' Antiq. xvii. ii. 4. The Jews were forbidden to taste swine's flesh, but some of them broke this law, and others bred these animals for their Pagan neighbors.

V. 31, 32. See the subsequent article on demoniacs.—Jesus may have permitted this destruction of animal life and loss of property, either because the owners if they were Jews showed a disregard of their divine law and he as a divine messenger was justified in inflicting this punishment of their avarice, or because if they were Pagans he was willing by so remarkable an occurrence to give notoriety to the miracle which he had just wrought, and to establish the remembrance of it in a part of the country which lay without the usual walks of his ministry, and where no harm could arise from the excitement it might produce. We learn from the other evangelists that he directed the man whom he had cured to 'go to his friends and show how great things God had done to him.' After all

the attempts to explain this narrative, some difficulties (of no practical importance however) remain, which will probably never be removed. We are not sufficiently acquainted with the circumstances, to determine what particularly influenced Jesus to deviate from his usual rule of unqualified beneficence.

V. 33. *Told every thing, about the demoniacs.* The construction of the sentence in the original shows the artless, unpolished style of the writer. If verbally rendered it would be—‘told the whole, and the things [the affair] of the demoniacs.’

V. 34. *Besought him to leave.* Alarm at the destruction of their property and dread of farther loss inspired the wish that Jesus should depart instantly, while reverence for one who had effected so marvellous a cure produced a respectful manner of address to him. Peter betrayed a state of mind in some degree similar, when he exclaimed after the miracle of the fishes (Luke v. 8) ‘Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.’

PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. The circumstances under which profession of adherence to Christ is now made are different from those which attended his ministry, yet the spirit which breathed through his replies to them who sought him with selfish views is a spirit of instruction to us not less than to them. Renunciation of ambitious and worldly purposes is in every age indispensable to the character of a follower of Jesus. They who come to him with faith in his divine office must come in sincerity, ready to relinquish every habit and desire of self-indulgence, that they may devote themselves in body and soul to the culture of excellence and the diffusion

of truth. Now, as at the commencement of the Christian church, singleheartedness is the condition of acceptable discipleship. Now, as then, the claims of duty must be preferred to every other call.

2. Jesus our Master was destitute of a home, because he chose to give himself up to the service of benevolence. He was a voluntary wanderer, a laborious teacher, and the minister of good to the incredulous and unthankful, from the love that he bore to our race. What an example has he given us! What a claim has he established on our admiration and gratitude! Christian, if tempted to indolence or impatience, remember him who 'though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor,' and who rose from the slumbers which a long day of beneficent occupation made sweet that he might relieve the distress of his fearful disciples. Be not thou 'weak in faith.' He in whom you believe was proved to be the messenger of God 'by many infallible proofs.' The storm was stilled by his word. The more terrible rage of disease by which the powers of the mind were prostrated was quelled by his authority. He is worthy of trust and obedience.

3. We cannot but observe the honesty of Jesus. He discouraged those from binding themselves to his cause, who were not prepared to experience inconvenience and suffering, and told them at once that his followers must lead lives of self-denial. This is not the conduct of an impostor. If Jesus had not been conscious of pure intentions, and had not relied on the divinity of his undertaking, he would have adopted a very different course.

4. It should not surprise us that some parts of the

New Testament present difficulties which no study can remove. In a volume that has come down to us from so distant an age, written with so little system or apparent regard to the situation of any but contemporary readers, it would be strange if many passages were not of doubtful interpretation, and if some did not remain after all our efforts to explain them in a less clear light than we could desire. The Gospels are not methodical narratives or biographies, but memoranda, as it were, of the ministry of Christ. This style of composition is one of the proofs of their genuineness, yet is one of the sources of difficulty in their perusal.

ON BIBLICAL CRITICISM.

'Criticism' and 'interpretation' are sometimes used as if they had a common meaning. They do not however mean the same thing. The difference between them should especially be regarded in speaking of the Scriptures, as they signify two distinct and independent branches of inquiry. Criticism and interpretation as sciences are both of modern growth, and assist each other, but may be pursued separately. Criticism determines the correct text of a writer, interpretation explains his language; the former ascertains what he wrote, the latter what he meant. Each has its laws, and each will reward the pains-taking student by the satisfaction which he will obtain for his own mind and by the service which he may be enabled to render others. Every reader should understand and apply

the general principles of interpretation, but few can become critics; for criticism is employed in examining the original documents or the transcriptions of them, which few persons can inspect, and in weighing evidence which only one familiar with the subject can justly estimate.

The books which compose the Bible were written, many centuries before the art of printing was invented, in Hebrew or Greek. The first copies—those copies of the Gospels, for example, which were written by the Evangelists—are called *autographs*. These all perished long ago. The copies made in writing are called *manuscripts*; of which there must have been a great number, as the Old Testament was read by so many Jews in so many countries, and afterwards the whole Bible but especially the New Testament by so many Christians in all parts of the world. They would all be glad to have a copy, but copies could be multiplied only by writing. These copies would be made by different persons, some better qualified than others by more exact habits of attention, a plainer style of penmanship, or a more conscientious regard to fidelity in the transcription. Sometimes changes of greater or less extent and of more or less importance, (though none of a very serious nature would be attempted,) might be made designedly by those who were willing to alter the text to favor their own opinions. Such changes are called *corruptions*, while the original text is called *genuine*. It was common with the early transcribers to insert in the margin explanatory words or brief sentences, which might afterwards be mistaken for parts of the genuine text and be copied into a new

manuscript. When any thing that did not belong to the original text was added to it, it is said to have been *interpolated*. The ancient mode of writing rendered it much more easy to mistake or to alter a word; as all the letters were of the same size, and were written in close succession without any points or distances between either the words or the sentences.

Any one may now see that in the course of years, and yet more in the course of centuries, the manuscripts of the same book might differ considerably from each other. The different ways in which the same passage is found to have been written are called *various readings*. The great cause of wonder is not that so many various readings have been collected from an examination of the numerous manuscripts that have been compared, but that so few are discovered which affect the sense. To ascertain the number and respective value of these various readings is the business of the biblical critic. Every one must perceive the importance of his work. He endeavors to present an exact copy of the Scriptures, or of some part of them, as they were left by those who first committed them to writing. This is what we want. Nobody wishes to have the words of another person given him as the words of the Prophets or Apostles. If I am reading one of Paul's Epistles, I desire to have a faithful transcript of what he or the person whom he employed as his amanuensis (or secretary) wrote, and not what the carelessness or impertinent prejudice of some copyist has substituted in its place. However slight the variation, in a work which I hold so precious I would secure the utmost accuracy. My desire will be the same whether I am

reading the work in the original or in a translation; for a translation if made from a faulty original will preserve its errors.

When the first printed Bibles appeared little attention had been given to this subject. Few manuscripts were examined by the editors. When those editions of the Old and New Testament in the original languages were published which were used by the translators of our common version, but little had been done towards the obtaining of a correct *text*, or what was written by the sacred authors. The editions which they followed they considered the best, or *standard*, editions, and the text which these contained is now called the *received text*. Since that time sacred criticism has been carefully studied, its principles investigated and brought into use, manuscripts that were then known to exist have been consulted anew by more accurate observers, other manuscripts entitled from their age or other circumstances to more weight, and therefore said to be better *authorities*, have been discovered and examined, and the consequence of all this labor is an *amended text*, or one more nearly a copy of the autographs, which I just now said are lost. It is perfectly plain that such an amended text should be preferred to the received text, and that all new translations should be made from it.

In recent times many scholars have diligently pursued this branch of study. Some of them have published new editions of the Hebrew or Greek Testament. One of these editions deserves particular mention. It was prepared after years of laborious study by John James Griesbach, a native of Butzbach, a town in the

Duchy of Hesse Darmstadt, who was successively Professor of theology at the Universities of Halle and Jena in Germany, at which latter place he died in 1812. He inspected many manuscripts himself, collected, compared and arranged the testimonies of other critics, and gave as the result that edition of the New Testament which has by general consent been adopted as the standard. He was particularly fitted to execute this work by his impartiality and accuracy. Manuscripts that yet remain to be examined may produce a preponderance of testimony in favor of some reading which he has rejected, and in other instances his decision may be reversed by future scholars. But the time never can come when it will not appear that he rendered good and great service to the cause of biblical criticism; and at present at least his edition has better claims than any other to be esteemed the *standard text* of the New Testament.

When we consider for how many ages writing was the only means of multiplying copies of the Scriptures, and to how many different hands the office of transcription must have been entrusted, we are surprised, I would again remark, to discover so few important variations of the text. Though several thousand various readings are noticed by later editors of the New Testament alone, yet most of them make no difference in the sense of a passage. In a very few instances only would the sense be materially affected by adopting one rather than another of the readings. And with them all, the great truths and facts, the doctrines, precepts and spirit, of the Bible remain the same.

ON THE DEMONIACS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

We read in the Gospels of cures which Jesus effected by his miraculous power in persons 'possessed with devils' or 'with evil spirits.' The condition of these persons presents one of the difficult subjects of scriptural interpretation. What was their real state? and what was the nature of the miracles wrought upon them? As this subject has received comparatively little attention in this country, I propose to examine it at some length, and to exhibit in as brief a space and as popular a form as I may find convenient, yet with less regard to these restrictions than I usually observe, the arguments which I have been able to collect from writers who have treated of the subject.

Commentators and theologians are divided into those who defend and those who question the reality of possession. The former take the language of the New Testament literally, and believe that evil spirits entered the bodies of men in Judea in the time of our Lord and were expelled by his authority and in his name. The latter receive the language of the New Testament as popular, and contend that the persons of whom the Evangelists speak were the subjects of certain natural diseases, but were described in the terms then commonly used to denote such diseases.

If we would discover the truth in this as in other inquiries we must divest our minds of prejudice, that no argument may be defrauded of its proper force nor we be prevented from approaching if we cannot reach absolute conviction. The remark is the more pertinent,

since the importance of the inquiry has been greatly exaggerated, and the interests of religion have been supposed to be endangered by any distrust of the common sentiment. If a decision on this subject involved questions of the greatest moment, some persons might think it still more their duty to institute a thorough and candid examination. But it is not of so momentous a nature. Whatever injury could result from a disbelief of demoniacal possession must be seen in its effect upon either the miraculous evidence of Christianity, or the credibility of the evangelical narratives, or the character of our Lord, or the general views that may be entertained of the divine government and human condition. In respect to the first of these points, it should be remembered that all concur in admitting a miracle, and that there was unquestionably as clear a proof of divine power in the instantaneous removal of a disease by which both body and mind were afflicted as in the expulsion of an evil spirit, which according to the common system of demonology must have been subject to the control of any other spirit of like character but higher rank. In the one case indeed the divine authority would be evident, while in the other it might remain doubtful.*—As to the credibility of the Evangelists, in using the language of their times they gave no reason to suspect the truth of their narratives. It is a question of interpretation that is submitted to us, what was meant by demoniac, or demonized, or 'possessed with devils,' in the time of Christ? Whatever

* The Pharisees alleged that Jesus might cast out demons by the assistance of Beelzebub their prince, but the question was put as decisive of a divine mission, 'Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?'

answer be given, it cannot touch the competency or integrity of the narrators. They related facts; we wish to know what those facts were.*—It has been thought that our Lord's character is implicated, for if the language used by him is not taken in its literal sense he must have been guilty of deception and unfaithfulness. As this is a very serious charge, I shall consider it more at large in a subsequent part of these remarks; and will now only observe that if Jesus adopted the phraseology which he found prevalent in Judea and made use of terms in the sense in which they were received by the people, he took the course which might have been expected from one who arose not as a critic but as a religious teacher, a reformer not of language but of hearts and lives.—In regard lastly to the effect of the doctrine of possessions on our views of the divine government and human condition, it is contended by those who reject the doctrine that it is not easily seen to be consistent with the perfection of the supreme Governor of the universe that he should permit malignant beings to torment his creatures who could oppose no resistance to their evil purposes, nor is the belief of such an agency suited to produce either piety or happiness but rather distrust of God's love and a state of miserable anxiety.

No harm then can arise from considering this a fair subject of investigation. Some earnest friends of

*Both sides are agreed that whatever may have been the origin of these disorders, the cure was miraculous. So that, whatever may be our ideas as to the inferences which might be made from either of these opinions, we are not to charge those who hold either the one or the other as doubting the divine authority of Christ or the integrity of the Evangelists.' Appleton's Lectures.

Christianity have thought that they should render a service to their religion if they could disprove the soundness of the popular belief, as one of the causes of offence would then be removed out of the way of infidels who find in the usual interpretation of these parts of the sacred history occasion of sneer and cavil. When moreover it is considered that learned and pious men have adopted different opinions, the impropriety of charging either those who believe in the reality of possession with ignorance or those who disbelieve with irreligion must be apparent.

I have said that the popular belief admits the reality of possessions. It may however be doubted towards which side opinion inclines in the present day among Protestant scholars. About two centuries ago Joseph Mede, an eminent English divine, defended the proposition that the demoniacs of the New Testament were the subjects only of natural diseases. In the course of the last century this opinion was advocated with much ability in France, Germany and England, and is probably gaining every day new favor.* It is not however altogether a modern opinion. A remarkable passage

* 'In England besides the writings of the physician Richard Mead, the Discourses of Lardner incorporated into the Credibility of the Gospel History, and other smaller or less valuable works, this question gave rise to two controversies with which the student should make himself familiar, one between Sykes and Twells, the other between Farmer and Worthington. The subject is more or less discussed by most commentators on the Gospels, but more fully by Wetstein and Hewlett than any others with whom I am acquainted. For a sketch of the arguments by which the common opinion is supported Macknight's 'Essay on the Demoniacs mentioned in the Gospels' prefixed to his Harmony may be read, or President Appleton's Lectures, Brunswick 1822; and for a compend of the arguments in favor of the opposite opinion Semler's 'Commentatio de Demoniacis quorum in N. T. fit mentio.'

is quoted from Origen who lived in the third century and was himself a believer in possession, who says that 'Physicians endeavored to account for them [the cases of demoniacs] in a natural way, not allowing the agency of any impure spirits, but calling them bodily distempers.' Let us pass however from names to arguments.

The question has been needlessly embarrassed by connecting with it a discussion respecting the precise meaning of the word 'demons.' Farmer has labored to show that it always denotes departed spirits, or the souls of dead men.* Such, he contends, were the gods of the Pagans,—men deified after death; and he is the more anxious to establish this point, not only because it is an unnatural supposition that the souls of the dead would enter any other bodies than those which they had left, but because the gospel has made such revelations respecting departed spirits as prove the impossibility of the idea, and because the Apostle, as he understands him, asserts the absolute nullity of the heathen deities. It may be doubted whether the evidence which he adduces in favor of his theory is conclusive, and a determination upon it is not necessary to a decision on the main subject.† The ques-

* Lardner with his usual clear judgment seems to express the truth when he speaks of 'the word demon being used not only by heathens themselves for their deities, but also, and that not seldom, in the sacred Scriptures; and heathen deities being *generally* supposed to be dead men or departed spirits.' 'Case of the Demoniacs,' Disc. II. There is ample proof, that 'demon' was used both in a good and a bad sense, or as the title both of good and evil spirits, by the Pagans, though by the Jews in a bad sense only.

† This is acknowledged by Farmer himself. 'I must add, that should you be able to overturn the first of these propositions, that

tion may be stated in the broadest form,—were the demoniacs of the New Testament inhabited by malignant spirits, who controlled their motions and used their organs for their own pleasure? Some writers say that they were, and that our Lord's power was exerted in expelling the evil spirits; while others say that these unhappy persons were suffering under mental and bodily disease, that is, that they were afflicted either with melancholy which overpowered the reason, or with more violent insanity, or with epilepsy producing mental disorder,—persons in whom physical derangement acted on the mind, and whom Jesus instantly restored to health.*

The terms which occur in the New Testament on this subject should receive attention. The word commonly used is improperly rendered 'devil.' A different word is always used to denote this being.† In the Greek

would not affect the second. * * * * In other words, whoever the possessing demons of the ancients are supposed to be, whether human spirits or fallen angels, the demoniacal possessions and dispossessions mentioned in the New Testament cannot be understood in a sense different from that in which they are here explained.' Letters to Worthington, pp. 237, 238.

* The remark of Lardner that 'they were *mere* bodily diseases and indispositions' is not strictly accurate. In contrast with the idea of possession, and as the body was the seat of the disease, they might be called 'mere bodily diseases;' but the peculiarity of these cases, I suppose, was, that the operations of the mind were disordered in consequence of physical distemper. To use the language of our own times, a demoniac was one who did not enjoy the full exercise of his reason.

† 'Possessions are never attributed to the being termed *ὁ διαβολος*. Nor are his authority and dominion ever ascribed to *δαίμονια*.' Campbell's Sixth Dissertation, prefixed to his 'Four Gospels,' Part I. His remarks on the import of the words *διαβολος*, *δαιμων*, and *δαιμονιον* are worthy of perusal. As I understand Acts x. 38 possessions are ascribed to the devil as their author.

two words occur both of which may be rendered, with scarcely any change from the original, *demon*.* Those who were the subjects of our Lord's miraculous goodness are not said to be 'possessed with devils,' as the term is translated in our Bibles, but to be *demonized*, and hence they are called by theologians demoniacs. They are also said in the Evangelists to have *unclean spirits* and *evil spirits*.† It may aid us in determining the import of these expressions, to ascertain if possession by an evil spirit is ever intimated in the Bible except in connexion with cures wrought by Jesus or his disciples; then, for the sake of method, I will examine the language of Scripture as it appears in this connexion, and afterwards notice what is said on the one side and on the other respecting the support which this language gives to a belief in the reality of demoniacal possession.

If we look into the Old Testament, we shall find but little that seems to have any connexion with the subject. It is hardly necessary to say that whatever ex-

* The word *δαίμων*, in the singular or the plural form, is used four times in the New Testament, viz. in the accounts given by the three Evangelists of the cure of the Gadarene demoniacs, Matt. viii. 31, Mark v. 12, Luke viii. 29 and once in the Revelation xviii. 2. *Δαίμονον*, either in the singular or plural, occurs sixtyone times. The verb *δαμονίζομαι*, in the verbal or participial formation, thirteen times. The compound words *δαισιδαίμων* and *δαισιδαίμονια* and *δαμονιωδης* are found, each once, in Acts xvii. 22, xxv. 19, James iii. 15.

† The term 'foul spirit' is used once in the common version, Mark ix. 25, but the original word is the same which is in other places rendered 'unclean.' The expression, 'a spirit of an unclean demon,' also occurs once, Luke iv. 33, evidently only a Hebraistic variation of the more common form. Compare ver. 35 and Mark i. 23.

planation may be given of Eve's temptation* or of Job's trial,† the cases had no resemblance to those of the New Testament. The same remark may be made respecting the magicians who contended with Moses, and the woman of Endor whom Saul besought to call the prophet Samuel from the dead; nothing in the narrative demands the presence of diabolical agency.‡ —It is related of Saul, that 'an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him,' but that when David played before him he 'was refreshed, *and was well*, and the evil spirit departed from him;§ the language as well as the circumstances showing that he was subject to returns of melancholy or of frenzy, which being regarded as a just punishment for his disobedience to the divine commands, the sacred historian after the manner of his countrymen describes it as the visitation of an evil spirit from Jehovah.—The Prophet Micaiah is in one place¶ represented as saying that 'the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth' of the false prophets who encouraged Ahab to attack the city of Ramoth Gilead; but the previous verses alone might suggest the explication, that this was a figurative mode of expressing the

* It is worthy of note that no mention is made of the devil in the scriptural account of 'the fall.'

† It is pretty well agreed among critics that the book of Job may be considered a poem, in which great rhetorical license should be allowed the writer.

‡ The tricks of the magicians by which they endeavored to compete with Moses were either gross impositions upon the credulity of the king, or the results of artifice at which he connived. The appearance of Samuel seems to have startled the witch no less than the monarch, and may be resolved into a special act of the divine pleasure.

§ 1 Sam. xvi. 14—16, 23.

¶ 2 Chron. xviii. 22.

falsehood of those prophets, which being permitted by God was according to Jewish custom directly attributed to him.—God is said to have ‘sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem;’* by which nothing more is meant than we should mean by saying that in the course of divine providence hatred sprang up between them. The notice of witchcraft in the Mosaic law† and the allusions to commerce with evil spirits in the Prophets prove only the wickedness and prevalence of such superstition, and not its foundation in truth. I do not know therefore that the Old Testament any where justifies a belief in diabolical or demoniacal possessions.‡

We may now inquire if any other passages of the New Testament than those in which the miraculous cure of demoniacs is expressly mentioned will throw light on this subject. Upon the return of the seventy disciples from their mission and their exclaiming with joy, ‘Lord, even the demons are subject to us through thy name,’ Jesus ‘said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.’|| Is it not probable that our Lord meant by these words to express

* Judges ix. 23.

† ‘Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live,’ Exod. xxii. 18. In Deut. xviii. 10, 11 several terms are used to describe those who pretended to hold intercourse with evil spirits. Such pretensions were acts of impiety and treason against Jehovah who had forbidden the Israelites to ‘have any other god besides Him,’ and were justly punishable with death.

‡ Possession by an evil spirit i. e. the actual presence of the evil being in the body of the sufferer is a very different thing from an influence exerted by an external agent through whatever instrumentality.

|| Luke x. 18. Compare John xii. 31 and xvi. 11.

the conviction which he had or the assurance which he had received, that his religion should prevail over the power of evil;* of which he had a new pledge in the supernatural works performed by his ministers? for he adds, 'I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy.' I cannot think that he only intended to signify the relief which should be afforded to those who were under the control of indwelling demons.—One of our Lord's miracles consisted in healing a woman, 'a daughter of Abraham, who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years and could in no wise lift herself up.' This woman Jesus described as one 'whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years.†' Whatever was the meaning of this expression, it is clear that the woman was suffering under a bodily weakness, from which she was freed by Jesus; 'he laid his hands on her, and immediately *she was made straight*.' 'A spirit of infirmity' is used by a familiar Hebrew idiom for—an infirmity. If then our Lord be supposed to teach that the devil was the author of this woman's condition, her case would still be dissimilar from that of persons in whom evil spirits had taken up their abode. 'Satan hath bound her.' Must this expression be interpreted literally, or shall it be understood as a compliance with the language of the Jews, among whom, as we are told by the learned Lightfoot, 'it was very usual to attribute some of the more grievous diseases to evil spirits, es-

* Sykes interprets the passage as particularly pointing to the decline of 'idolatry and false worship,' which he thinks were built on the original doctrine about demons, that they were deified men.

† Luke xiii. 11—16.

pecially those wherein either the body was distorted, or the mind disturbed and tossed with a phrensie.* The circumstances of the case so plainly show this to have been an instance of physical disorder, such as frequently occurs, that I adopt the latter explanation. —The Apostle Peter in his address to Cornelius declared that ‘Jesus went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil.’† It is commonly thought that under this description Peter meant to include all the sick whom Jesus had restored to health, and that he spoke after the custom of his times, as exhibited in the extract just made from Lightfoot. But I am inclined to believe that he had special reference to the condition of demoniacs, whose distempers were attributed to malign influence. —Two of the Evangelists in relating the treachery of Judas declare that ‘Satan entered into him,’‡ a figurative expression so similar to one which is often heard among us as descriptive of a man who conceives a wicked purpose that I hardly need refer to John’s own explanation of the phrase in a previous verse,—‘the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray him.’§ So also Peter addressing Ananias said, ‘Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the holy spirit?’§

In a subsequent chapter of the book of Acts we read of

* Lightfoot on Matt. xvii. 15. His quotations under this text do not appear sufficient alone to support the remark; yet it is repeated by others as of undoubted authority.

† Acts x. 38. The Greek here is του διαβολου.

‡ Luke xxii. 3, John xiii. 27.

§ John xiii. 2.

§ Acts v. 3.

a certain Simon, who had 'used sorcery in the city of Samaria' and 'of long time had bewitched the people with sorceries.'* He plainly was one of those impostors who professed to practise magic, and astonished or perplexed (not bewitched, as the word is improperly translated) the inhabitants of the place with his art.— A similar example of abuse of the public credulity is recorded in the account of Paul's visit to Philippi,† where 'a damsel possessed with a spirit of divination, who brought her masters much gain by soothsaying, followed Paul and his companions, crying, 'These men are the servants of the most high God, who show unto us the way of salvation.' Paul, it is added, 'being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he [or it] came out the same hour.' In the original she is represented as having '*a spirit of Python*.' Python was one of the appellations of Apollo, who was regarded by the Heathens as especially the god of oracles. Those persons who pretended or imagined that they received inspiration ascribed the gift to him. This girl was of the number, and probably had persuaded herself into the belief that she was at times inspired, under the influence of which belief she might not only appear but really be the victim of mental derangement.‡ The citizens of Philippi were predisposed by their Pagan superstitions to accredit her pretensions, and she was a source of profit to the persons to whom

* Acts viii. 9—11.

† Acts xvi. 16—18.

‡ It has been supposed, and not without some evidence of a critical nature in favor of the idea, that this person was a ventriloquist.

she belonged. In the intervals of calmness or of reason she heard of Paul and his friends, whose preaching must have been a matter of notoriety and whose miraculous gifts were particularly suited to attract her attention. With her mind impressed with what she learned about or from them, it was not strange that when the excitement of periodical disease or habit gave to her impressions the force of uncontrollable impulses, she should follow the Christian teachers, crying out as the sacred historian represents. But it would be more than strange, it would be inexplicable that an evil spirit, whose character was a sufficient pledge of his hostility to the gospel, should have taken so direct a means of bringing it into popular favor; for the supposition that the devil practised this artifice to 'throw suspicion on the Apostle may well be called a desperate attempt to solve a difficulty. Peter, being grieved to see her condition and perhaps annoyed by her clamor, addressed her according to the ideas entertained both by herself and by the people, and the whole affair is described by Luke in the common language of the times. So far as either the Apostle or the historian may be charged with want of fidelity to truth, the remarks that will be made on our Lord's conduct may serve for their vindication.

Another passage in the book of Acts demands attention.* During the abode of Paul at Ephesus we learn that certain Jews who had resorted to the impostures of exorcism, probably for a livelihood, introduced the name of Jesus into their forms of adjuration; which

*Acts xix. 13—16.

will not appear strange, if we consider that for 'the space of two years' the efficacy of that name had been proved by the miracles of the Apostle. On one occasion when some of them had attempted to effect a cure of a demoniac by this means, the man under the influence of delirium (as those who argue against demoniacal possession say) resented their imbecile hypocrisy with that acuteness of discrimination and violence of manner which are so characteristic of insanity, and having from Paul's long residence in the city become acquainted with his preaching and supernatural gifts exclaimed in such language as should not surprise us from a crazy man, 'Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?' at the same time attacking them with the rage incident to his disorder, and prevailing over them alike by the unnatural strength of which it was also the source and by the terror which his fury must have inspired. The circumstances present nothing inconsistent with the character of a maniac, while the narrative shows how common was the belief in the agency of evil spirits and the efficacy of magical charms.—The Evangelists record an incident that bears some resemblance to this last. While Jesus was on earth it appears that some who had not professed themselves his disciples used his name for the purpose of exorcism. 'Master,' said John, 'we saw one casting out demons in thy name, and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us.' The answer of Jesus is remarkable. 'Forbid him not; for there is no one who shall do a miracle in my name that can lightly speak evil of me.*' If we

* Mark ix. 38, 39, Luke ix. 49, 50.

suppose that cures were wrought by these persons through their faith in the divine power of Jesus, the language corresponds with that which is used in describing the miracles of his Apostles and must be interpreted on the same principles. The fact stated by John and the manner in which he mentions it afford an incidental proof that demonology was a familiar subject at that time.—The casting out of demons was joined by Christ with other wonderful works which false disciples should pretend to do in his name.*

Two texts in the Epistles of Paul may be thought to belong to this inquiry, in which he speaks of delivering persons to Satan, and as he subjoins in one place, 'for the destruction [or affliction] of the flesh.'† But as it is altogether improbable that the Apostle ever exercised his miraculous power in sending evil spirits into human bodies, the passages are not strictly parallel with those in the Gospels. The Apostle's meaning has been variously construed, some expositors thinking he intended to signify excommunication from the Christian church, others that he had in mind some Jewish doctrine respecting the agency of Satan in producing disease, and others that his language was a highly figurative description of penal suffering.

There are a few other passages in the Gospels which require examination before we turn to such as are the immediate occasion of the present inquiry. Our Lord himself was more than once accused of acting under demoniacal influence. When on one of the

* Matt. vii. 22.

† 1 Cor. v. 5, 1 Tim. i. 20.

public feasts at Jerusalem he charged the people with an intention to kill him, they answered, 'Thou hast a demon; who goeth about to kill thee?''* Again, after the most severe rebuke which he ever addressed to them, they exclaimed, 'Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a demon?'† And after another of his discourses we are told that 'many of them said, he hath a demon, and is mad; why hear ye him? Others said, these are not the words of him that hath a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?'‡ It appears from these verses that the idea of possession was prevalent among the Jews, since they resorted to this accusation when their passions led them to heap insult upon Jesus. It does not appear that the phrases 'he has a demon' and 'he is mad' were used by them as of precisely the same import, but that they considered the one fact a consequence of the other. It appears that they spoke of 'him who had a demon' and of 'a demon' as convertible terms. And it is plain that they imputed demoniacal possession to one whose words they thought or wished to think indicated insanity.

At another time they brought the same charge against Jesus, though in a different form. The Pharisees endeavored to obviate the effect of his miracles on the minds of the people by affirming that he cast out demons 'by Beelzebub, the prince of the demons,' or as Mark relates, they said, 'he hath Beelzebub,' which he afterwards explains, 'They said, he hath an un-

* John vii. 20.

† John viii. 48.

‡ John x. 20, 21.

clean spirit.* Our Lord shows the folly of the accusation by arguments founded on the belief which it implied in the agency and relative rank of evil spirits. Instead of contesting an opinion universally current he assumes its correctness, and by the use of what logicians call the argument '*ad hominem*' he puts them to silence before the multitude, who could perceive the force of such reasoning but might have been slow to admit the truth of a doctrine that overthrew their common notions. He first observes that the explanation which they give of his power of expelling demons bears absurdity on its face, since it supposes that the chief of those spirits after having sent them into the bodies of men employed him to drive them out, contradicting himself—one moment gratifying his malignity and at another discovering benevolence, entrusting also to Jesus the means of establishing a religion which he could only regard with hatred, and in effect subverting his own empire. He then reminds them of the power which some of their own disciples pretended to exercise in healing demoniacs; to which as the Pharisees made no reply, it is evident that pretensions of this sort were common. He next alludes to the opposition that existed between his purposes and those which must be cherished by evil spirits, and cites his success in restoring persons who were thought to be under their dominion as a proof of his superior power, which they on their own principles must attribute to a divine commission. And finally he sets before them the guilt of

* Matt. xii. 22—32, Mark iii. 22—30, Luke xi. 14—23. The same attempt to destroy his influence had been made previously, Matt. ix. 34.

ascribing the works which he was enabled to do by the power of God to the cooperation of a malignant being whom they accounted the enemy of Jehovah.

Jesus was not the only teacher of righteousness who subjected himself to the charge of demoniacal possession. They said of John the Baptist, 'he hath a demon.' Why? 'He came neither eating nor drinking.* His simple and austere habits confounded them, and they thought that he could not be 'in his right mind.'

Our Lord delivered a parable in which he described the character of the Jewish people, who had at first seemed inclined to repentance by his preaching and that of his forerunner but were returning to their former state with even stronger propensities to wickedness, under the figure of a man of whom an unclean spirit from which he had once been freed takes possession with 'seven other spirits more wicked than himself.† As this parable appears to have been spoken immediately after his refutation of the charge that he was confederate with the ruler of demons, it may have been suggested by those circumstances. He converts a popular opinion into a channel of instruction—not directly, let it be observed, but through a parable, in framing which he might use any facts or opinions that were familiar to his hearers without giving the authority of his name for their truth.

It may now, I think, be affirmed that there are no passages in the Bible which teach the reality of demoniacal possession, excepting those in the Gospels

* Matt. xi. 18, Luke vii. 33.

† Matt. xii. 43—45, Luke xi. 24—26.

which speak of miracles wrought in relief of demoniacs and such other passages as must be construed on whatever principles we shall find proper to apply to these in the Gospels. To these let us attend.

The number of miraculous cures of demoniacs described by the Evangelists is not great. I believe they are only six;—that of a man in the synagogue at Capernaum,* that of the Gadarene,† of a dumb man in the neighborhood of Capernaum,‡ of a blind and dumb demoniac,|| of the daughter of the Syrophenician woman,§ and that of the lunatic child whose case is more particularly described than any other and whom Jesus addressed as a ‘dumb and deaf spirit.’¶ If to these we add that of Mary Magdalene, of whom it is said incidentally by two of the Evangelists that she was delivered from seven demons,** we have seven cases specified in which our Lord exerted his miraculous power for the relief of demoniacs. From the symptoms detailed in these cases we must learn how far the appearances which were thought to indicate possession correspond with those which are now known to mark insanity or epilepsy. If the number seem small, it should be remembered that less than forty of the miracles of Jesus are specified by the Evangelists, and that the cure of demoniacs is mentioned at other times and in a manner to show both its frequency and its importance. If we examine the narratives with care, we shall find some

* Mark. i. 23—26, Luke iv. 33—35.

† Matt. viii. 28—34, Mark v. 1—20, Luke viii. 26—39.

‡ Matt. ix. 32, 33.

|| Matt. xii. 22, Luke xi. 14.

§ Matt. xv. 21—28, Mark vii. 24—30.

¶ Matt. xvii. 14—18, Mark ix. 17—27, Luke ix. 38—42.

** Mark xvi. 9, Luke viii. 2.

points of variety and some of resemblance. Persons of different ages, sexes and conditions were sufferers under this affliction. Two were dumb, another blind and dumb, two furious, two subject to convulsions, and of one it is only said that she was 'grievously vexed.' The Gadarene demoniacs appear to have been raving madmen; they wore no clothes, broke their chains and wandered among the mountains and tombs, making loud noises, cutting themselves and attacking passengers. The youth whom the disciples could not heal is declared by his father to be lunatic, and the paroxysms are described like those of an epileptic person. 'Whosoever it taketh him he suddenly crieth out, and it teareth him, and he foameth and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away. Ofttimes he falleth into the fire and oft into the water.' He is said to have been subject to these attacks 'from a child;' and while before Jesus, 'he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming.' This is an accurate description of epilepsy recurring at intervals of a month and thence styled a case of lunacy.* Sometimes the possession is ascribed to a single spirit, at other times to more. Mary Magdalene had seven, and the Gadarene said his name

* 'Epilepsy; a nervous disease, often an incurable periodical disease, appearing in single paroxysms. The patient suddenly falls, commonly with a cry, the thumbs are convulsed, other parts are agitated more or less, entire insensibility succeeds, the breath is short and quick, broken and accompanied with groans, the mouth foams, the face is convulsed, the teeth gnash together, the eyes are distorted. Sometimes the paroxysms occur nine or ten times in an hour; sometimes only once a month, at the change of the moon, or every six months, or at still longer periods.' *Encyclopedia Americana*. Every one must notice the similarity of language between this extract and the Evangelists. It may be added that young persons are particularly subject to epilepsy.

was Legion, 'because many demons were entered into him.' Both these expressions may probably be taken as round numbers,* to denote (according to the different theory of explanation) the presence of several demons, or the violence of the disease.

Let us next inquire what passed between these persons and Jesus. In two instances they saluted him as the Messiah, and deprecated the exercise of his power, as fearing that he had come 'to torment' or 'destroy' them. Mark also observes generally, that 'unclean spirits when they saw him fell down before him and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God.'† Christ addressed them as possessed persons or as demons, requiring them to be silent and to 'come out;' and the spirits are said to have come out of the persons into whom they had entered. Besides the particular examples given by Mark he states generally, that Jesus 'cast out many demons, and suffered not the demons to speak, because they knew him,' and 'he straitly charged them that they should not make him known.'‡ The circumstances connected with the cure of the Gaderene present a special difficulty. The demons are represented as asking and obtaining permission if obliged to quit the human body to enter a herd of swine, whom they instantly forced into the water where they were drowned.

Having brought together the facts that the New

* Seven is well known to be a number of frequent occurrence in Scripture, to express fulness or completion. A legion was a division of the Roman army, containing at some times more than at others, but on an average 5000 men.

† Mark iii. 11. See also Luke iv. 41.

‡ Mark i. 34, iii. 12.

Testament furnishes on this subject, we shall be able to give their just weight to the arguments offered on the one side or the other of the question before us.

In proof of the reality of demoniacal possessions it is said,

1. That the Evangelists speak as believers in actual possession. They not only in repeating the words of others present this idea, but when they appear to give their own opinions use such terms as express the presence or expulsion of invisible intelligent agents; as when they make mention of our Lord's miracles, when they describe Mary Magdalene as one 'out of whom went seven demons,' and when Luke gives as his own statement what Mark records as that of the Gadarene demoniac, that his name was Legion, 'because many demons were entered into him.'*

2. That Jesus Christ used similar language, both in addressing demoniacs and in speaking of them,—that he commanded the 'unclean spirit' to be silent, to depart from the body which it possessed, and not to enter it again,† and that he included the expulsion of demons among the special labors of his ministry in his message to Herod, 'Go, tell that fox, behold I cast out demons and I do cures today and tomorrow.‡'

3. That the Apostles and other disciples used language of the same import, both in conversation with Jesus, as when they asked him, 'Why could not we

* The expression of Mark, (v. 12) '*all the demons besought him,*' has been quoted as emphatic, but the word '*all*' is rejected from the text by Griesbach on abundant authority. In Luke ix. 1 we have the declaration that Jesus gave his disciples power '*over all demons.*'

† Mark ix. 25.

‡ Luke xiii. 32.

cast him out,* and when the seventy returned with joy exclaiming, 'Even the demons are subject to us,† and in addressing the demoniacs, as when Paul 'said to the spirit' in the damsel at Philippi, 'I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.‡

4. That an evident distinction is made between demoniacs and other diseased persons, especially where the cure of demoniacs is named as a proof of a divine commission. It is enumerated among the mighty works of Christ;|| is specified among the miraculous endowments of his disciples both during his ministry and after his ascension;§ it seems to have excited the special admiration of the people;¶ and our Lord's language was particularly strong when he declared, 'This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.'**

5. That the demoniacs speak of themselves as possessed persons, as may especially be seen in the case of the Gadarene miracle, to which I need only refer.

6. That some of the symptoms and some of the circumstances attending the cures prove the presence of more than natural disease, as the loss of the senses, the convulsions which followed the command of Jesus

* Matt. xvii. 19, Mark ix. 28.

† Luke x. 17.

‡ Acts xvi. 18.

|| Matt. iv. 24, Mark i. 34, Luke iv. 41, vii. 21.

§ Matt. x. 1, Mark iii. 15, vi. 7, 13, xvi. 17, Acts v. 16, viii. 7.

¶ Mark i. 27, Matt. ix. 33, xii. 23.

** Matt. xvii. 21, Mark ix. 29. The interpretation which applies these words to the demoniac as declaring that he must be reduced by abstinence cannot be admitted. Jesus probably wished to teach his disciples that in relieving cases of such apparent or presumed difficulty a perfect faith, the result of previous spiritual exercises, would be necessary.

that the demon should leave the body,* and the destruction of the swine in the lake of Tiberias.

7. That the demoniacs freely and loudly acknowledged the divine mission of Jesus and addressed him as the Son of God, when others were slow to receive him in this character and he had made no declaration of himself as the Messiah, by which they evinced knowledge superior to that of the multitude and such as was most unlikely to be gained by madmen; that it is affirmed that 'they knew that he was Christ;' and that Jesus imposed silence on them, as if he was unwilling to receive testimony from such a source.†

8. That if demoniacal possession be not true, the conduct of Jesus is irreconcilable with his character and office as an inspired teacher; since he permitted not only the people but the future ministers of his religion to remain under an error of serious moment in its connexion both with the piety and the happiness of men; and not only took no occasion to correct this error, as he might have done once and again, but by his uniform language in public and in private gave it support.

9. Finally, it is alleged that the power of casting out demons continued in the church till miraculous gifts were wholly withdrawn, that the Fathers make frequent mention of its exercise, and the Christian Apologists triumphantly appeal to this proof that their religion

* Mark i. 26 and Luke iv. 35, Mark ix. 26 and Luke ix. 42.

† Mark i. 34, iii. 12, Luke iv. 41. It has been proposed in the first and last of these passages to render the original, 'he did not suffer them to say that they knew,' but the common translation is preferable.

was entitled to preference over the religions of the Heathen world.*

These are the only arguments that seem to me of weight on this side of the question. It has indeed been said, that license was given to evil spirits during our Saviour's ministry that his triumph over their power might be more signally exhibited. But as this supposition is founded on the idea that we do not hear of demoniacal possessions except in our Saviour's age, which is palpably false, it does not require examination.

By those who deny the reality of possession it is observed,

1. That John makes no mention of the cure of demoniacs by Jesus or his disciples. The term occurs in his Gospel only in connexion with the charge brought against Jesus, that he 'had a demon.†

* As the truth of this argument, though not its force, is conceded by those who deny the reality of possession, it may not be necessary to cite passages from the Fathers. Yet two of the most remarkable may be allowed. Irenæus, who wrote in the latter part of the second century, speaking of Christians says, 'They certainly and truly expel demons, so that often those who are cleansed of evil spirits believe and enter the church.' Tertullian, who was contemporary with Irenæus, gives this challenge in his Apology: 'Let any one who it appears is controlled by a demon be produced before your tribunals, that spirit being commanded by any Christian to speak will as truly confess himself to be a demon as at other times falsely a god. *** Unless the demons make confession, not daring to utter falsehood to a Christian, shed the blood of that presumptuous Christian on the spot.' Cyprian, who lived in the third century, makes a similar appeal to the power of the Christians over the Heathen gods. I find the original quotations in 'An Essay towards indicating the literal sense of the demoniacs in the New Testament,' published in 1732 in answer to Dr Sykes's Enquiry.

† John vii. 20, viii. 48, 49, 52, x. 20, 21.

2. That unless demoniacs were insane or epileptic, so far as we have any evidence no persons suffering under these maladies were restored by our Lord, which is at least singular, as they were common in the East.

3. That the language of the New Testament is not invariable. The Evangelists often speak as if they accounted the demoniacs persons laboring under disease. They expressly state that they were *healed**; they introduce the mention of them among other cases of disease†; they at one time make the same distinction between lepers and other sick persons as between demoniacs and other sick persons, and at another seem to include the casting out of demons in the general authority 'to heal the sick;'‡ in relating the miracle on the Gadarene shore Mark and Luke say, that the citizens 'found him that was possessed with the demon and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind;'§ the different Evangelists in describing the same case use various language,§ impute the symptom or the action either to the man or to the demon,¶ and use the singular and plural number** in-

* Matt. xv. 28, (where the rendering in the common version is, she 'was made whole,') xvii. 18, compare ver. 16, Luke vi. 18, vii. 21, viii. 2, ix. 42. See also Acts x. 38.

† Matt. iv. 24, Acts v. 16.

‡ Matt. x. 8, Luke ix. 2, compare ver. 1.

§ Mark v. 15, Luke viii. 35.

§ Compare the examples quoted in the notes on p. 273.

¶ Matthew, xii. 22, says 'they brought to him a demoniac, blind and dumb;' Luke, xi. 14, says, 'he was casting out a demon, and it was dumb.' Mark, iii. 11, observes that 'unclean spirits when they saw Jesus fell down before him,' describing what could only be a bodily act.

** Compare the several accounts of the Gadarene, e. g. Matthew and Luke say, they [the demons] besought Jesus, but Mark says, 'he [the demoniac] besought him.'

differently about the same person; the same writer indulges in a similar variety of expression and confusion of numbers;* the demoniacs also use the singular and plural interchangeably.†

4. That if a distinction is made between demoniacs and other diseased persons, there were two reasons for it; 1. that the popular belief ascribed the disorders under which demoniacs suffered, and which were generally considered more difficult of cure than others, to demons; and 2. that they were disorders of a particular kind, affecting the mind as well as the body.

5. That if Jesus addressed and rebuked the demons, he also addressed and rebuked the elements;‡ fever likewise he rebuked;|| and if the demons are said to have 'gone out' of the persons who were healed, it is also said that fever 'left' the sick and that leprosy 'departed' from the leper.§

* Luke, xi. 14, immediately after pronouncing the demon dumb, says that 'when the demon was gone out, the dumb [man] spake.' Mark's diversity of language is quite remarkable; in chap. v. 2 he says that the man had 'an unclean spirit,' in verse 10 'he [the man] besought Jesus much that he would not send them [the demons] away out of the country,' in ver. 12 'the demons besought Jesus, saying, send us into the swine,' and 'he gave them leave,' in ver. 13 'the unclean spirits went out,' in ver. 15 the people 'see him that was possessed with the demon and had the legion,' and in vs. 16 and 18 he is again mentioned as he that was 'possessed with the demon.' It must be granted that the Evangelist used language very loosely. Luke in his account of the same miracle uses principally the word 'demons;' but in describing the man's condition he changes it for 'the unclean spirit' and 'the demon.'

† In Mark i. 24 and Luke iv. 34, the demoniac says, 'what have we to do with thee? I know thee.' In Mark v. 9 'My name is Legion, for we are many.'

‡ Matt. viii. 26, Mark iv. 39, Luke viii. 24.

|| Luke iv. 39.

§ Matt. viii. 15, Mark i. 31, Luke iv. 39, John iv. 52, Mark i. 43.

6. That the symptoms described or noticed by the Evangelists are in every case such as indicate the existence of natural disease, and may be attributed to that as a sufficient cause. Blindness, dumbness and deafness are physical affections of ordinary occurrence. Convulsions attend epileptic fits. Melancholy and insane persons forsake society and lead irregular lives. Madmen are violent and changeable in their humors. But could either of these disorders affect the organs of sight, speech or hearing? The ancient physicians said they might.* If their opinion should not be trusted, the disorder we may suppose took the character of taciturnity or pretended deafness, or the loss of sight or some other sense may have been a natural evil superadded to the mental alienation, each perhaps having aggravated the other.

7. That the language and conduct of the demoniacs agree to the character of insane persons, but are irreconcilable with the idea that they were the passive instruments of evil spirits. This remark requires some explanation. Only two cases in the Gospels are related with particularity, that of the lunatic or epileptic child, and that of the men of Gadara.† It is said of others in general terms that they proclaimed Jesus the Messiah. As this was done by the Gadarenes, their case presents every thing peculiar. They saluted Jesus, acknowledged his divine mission, deprecated his interference, expressed a dread of the suffering which they anticipated as their doom, gave themselves the name of Legion, besought Jesus not to send the demons with

*Farmer quotes Hippocrates and Galen as authorities. Essay p. 115.

† The only other similar narratives in the New Testament, Acts xvi. 16—18 and xix. 13—16, have been explained, pp. 266—268.

which their imaginations and not their bodies were full 'away out of the country,' as says one of the Evangelists, or 'into the deep,' as are the words of another (a discrepance worthy of notice,) then entreated him to let them, i.e. the demons a belief of which had taken possession of their minds, enter a herd of swine, and upon his signifying his permission are represented as restored to 'their right mind.' Here ends the account of the cure of these men or of their language and conduct before their restoration. What follows in the narrative we shall presently consider. Now what is there here, which an insane person persuaded that he was the abode and instrument of demons or evil spirits might not have said or done? what that would be unlikely for him to say or do? It is a characteristic of insanity that it reasons correctly from wrong premises. Suppose the idea that they were subjects of demoniacal possession had become fixed in these men's minds, admit only that it was possible for them to have taken up such a notion, and their whole behaviour being in harmony with this persuasion is satisfactorily explained. They confess the divinity or Messiahship of Jesus (for 'Son of God' was a title of the Messiah) when others hesitated, but it was perfectly in character for those who were governed by irregular impulses and who yielded to every external cause of excitement to utter the abrupt exclamation with which they saluted Jesus. Before we read of any miracle wrought upon a demoniac we learn that Christ had become an object of general attention, curiosity was awake at Capernaum and Nazareth,* and his fame spreading be-

* Luke iv. 23.

yond the bounds of Galilee 'went throughout all Syria.* Before he visited 'the territory of the Gergesenes,' multitudes 'from Decapolis and beyond the Jordan,' this very region, had followed him.† It would be almost singular if persons subject to derangement, when they wandered about, but having lucid intervals,‡ should not in one or other if not in both of these states of mind catch the rumor that was abroad in the land about the wonderful teacher and restorer of the sick. The expectation of the Messiah was then at its height, many were disposed to look to Jesus for the fulfilment of their hopes, and more were anxiously inquiring if he was not the Desire of their nation, though he had avoided any express declaration to this effect. What more probable than that the victims of insanity receiving the impression which the fame of Jesus was suited to produce should act under it, should connect with him all the ideas of power and authority which the Jews of that age attributed to the Messiah, and giving themselves to the full force of the two impressions, one false, the other true, but both real facts to their minds, —that they were possessed by evil spirits, and that Jesus was the Messiah, should speak and act precisely as the demoniacs of the Gospels spoke and acted? Their recognition of him need not surprise us, if we remember that in Judea and Galilee they might have seen him before, and that he was usually surrounded

* Matt. iv. 24.

† Matt. iv. 25.

‡ Lightfoot on Matt. viii. 28, gives this extract from one of the Jewish books;—'One while he is mad, another while he is well; while he is mad he is to be esteemed for a madman in respect of all his actions; while he is well, he is to be esteemed for one that is his own man in all respects.'

by a throng, whose words if not their presence alone might declare who he was. The demoniacs of Gadara might have seen Jesus previously on the other side of the sea, but we know too little of their history even to raise a difficulty on this point.

While every thing may be explained in consistency with the supposition of mental disorder, the idea of actual possession cannot easily be made to harmonize with the conduct of the demoniacs towards Jesus. They threw themselves in the way of him whom they should have most wished to avoid, they did every thing which they could do to recommend him to the people and to substantiate his claims to a divine mission, they took the most effectual means to overthrow their own power, and certainly gave some occasion for the severe remark of Farmer, that 'if you will ascribe the conduct of the demoniacs to the agency of demons, you must allow that the latter acted out of character and were as mad as the demoniacs themselves could be.*' Yet farther, the literal interpretation of these passages involves some curious questions respecting the wisdom of evil spirits in devising and executing mischief. They seem to have betrayed a great lack of wisdom in shutting themselves up in human bodies, when they might (according to the common notions) have done the same injuries to the objects of their persecution without such confinement; and especially when several were lodged in one body and clung to it so pertinaciously as this mode of interpretation requires us to believe, we discover a stupidity and a waste of means that are not

* Essay p. 279.

usually imputed to this class of beings. These remarks are not frivolous nor impertinent, for before we admit the doctrine of possession we are bound to examine all the difficulties with which it may be burthened.

8. That the reality of possession is no more proved by our Lord's imposition of silence on the demoniacs than by their knowledge of him. He did not always give them this charge, but on the contrary directed the Gadarene to 'go home to his friends, and tell them how great things the Lord had done for him.'* The same prohibition which he laid in other instances, he extended to other persons whom he healed and to his immediate disciples,† probably because he wished to prevent the popular excitement from being raised to such a pitch that the purposes of his ministry would be impeded.

The common mode of explaining this part of the history is liable to a very serious objection. The demons are supposed to have acted on constraint; and thus some of the remarks made under the last head are thought to be obviated. They were obliged by the divine power to bear testimony in favor of Jesus. But Jesus forbade them to bear testimony. Here then was a direct conflict between the will of God and the will of Christ. The argument is worth stating in form. Either the demons acknowledged the superiority of Jesus of their own accord or on divine compulsion; if of their own accord, they acted in violation of their character and of the purpose for which they had entered the bodies of men; if on divine compulsion, God forced them to do what

* Mark v. 19, Luke viii. 39.

† Matt. ix. 30, xii. 16, Mark vii. 36, viii. 26, Luke viii. 56, (Mark v. 43); Matt. xvi. 20, Mark viii. 30, Luke ix. 21.

Jesus prohibited them from doing, which contradiction it is difficult to reconcile with our Saviour's words, 'I and my Father are one.'

9. That the ejection of a demon literally understood involves the necessity of a prolonged exercise of miraculous power in favor of the demoniac, and that our Lord's omission except on one occasion of the charge, to 'enter no more into him,' is in this view remarkable. For the demon leaving his abode at the word of Jesus might instantly return on his departure, and as his dispositions of evil remained the same he might be expected to resume his former sway, unless prevented by a continual restraint imposed by a superior being; of which not the least intimation is given in the Scriptures.

10. That we do not hear of instances of demoniacal possession in recent times, and that this change in the popular language and faith as more enlightened views in philosophy and religion have prevailed furnishes a presumption against the reality of possession at any former period. For if evil spirits entered the bodies of men from a desire to do them harm, there is no obvious reason why they should not now adopt this mode of gratifying their malevolent dispositions. We may not be able to speak with confidence where so little is known, but in choosing between two modes of explanation we ought to adopt that which seems more free from perplexity.

11. That as the impression that they were subject to demoniacal control would prompt such language as was used by the demoniacs, so the adoption by the Evangelists and other disciples of Jesus and by Christ him-

self of the current phraseology of the times founded on a belief in this doctrine would produce such a style of writing and conversation as we find in the New Testament. If therefore it can be shown that the current phraseology of the times was founded on such a belief, and that Jesus and his apostles could adopt it without compromising their honesty or fidelity as religious teachers, we may presume, and in view of the previous arguments must presume, that they did adopt it though its origin was error. Now then we must go beyond the sacred volume, and it is affirmed,

12. That the doctrine of demoniacal possession was one of the articles of the popular belief among the Jews and also among the Heathens at the time of our Lord's appearance, that certain diseases were considered proofs of possession, and that a phraseology accordant with these ideas had been introduced and become so common that it might be called the universal language of the day. These propositions are stated together, because the evidence of their truth is generally found in the same facts or writings. To adduce this evidence would be impossible within any limits that I could prescribe to myself; and is not necessary, since the propositions are admitted by both the parties in this discussion.* I will only attempt to give its outlines. Demonology prevailed throughout the ancient world. Beginning in Chaldea the birth-place of superstition in a far distant period, it spread through the East, entered

* 'All antiquity indeed,' says Rev. Robert Gray, author of the 'Key to the Old Testament,' who maintained the reality of possession, 'believed in possessions except the followers of Democritus and the Sadducees among the Jews.' Discourses, p. 73.

Egypt and finally Europe. We find notices of it in the various literatures and religions of antiquity. Persia and India incorporated it into their systems of religious doctrine. Hesiod and Homer exhibit it in their verses, and later writers—dramatic poets, historians, philosophers, and physicians,* attest its general reception. To confine ourselves to the period to which the Evangelical histories belong,† besides the evidence furnished in these books we have abundant testimonies from both Jewish and Christian writers. Josephus the Jewish historian, who wrote at the close of the first century, speaks of Saul as one on whom ‘demons came’ and ‘seized him,’‡ declares that God gave Solomon ‘the skill to expel demons, which is a science useful and sanative to men,’ and adds that Solomon ‘left behind him the manner of using exorcisms, by which they drive away demons so that they never return; and this method of cure is of great force unto this day; for I have seen a certain man of my own country, whose name was Eleazar, releasing people that were demoniacal in the presence of Vespasian and his sons and his captains and the whole multitude of his soldiers.’ He then proceeds to describe the method pursued by this man, who, he soberly affirms, drew the demon through

* The epilepsy was called the ‘sacred disease’ by the Greeks. Hippocrates, opposing the common idea, treated it as a natural distemper.

† Lardner in his ‘History of Heretics of the two first centuries after Christ,’ B. II. Chap. II. Sect. 14, observes, ‘The notion of demons, or the souls of dead men having the power over living men, was universally prevalent among the Heathens, and was believed by many Christians;’ and in the same section speaks of ‘notions of demonism which had overrun the whole world.’

‡ Antiq. vi. 8. 2, and 11. 2.

the nostrils of the demoniac by means of a ring containing a particular root, and required him to overturn a cup full of water as a proof of his departure.* No man in his senses would have repeated such a story unless he knew that the popular belief would sustain him. Another passage still more to the purpose occurs in another work of his, in which he describes the miraculous efficacy of a certain root which was found near the Dead Sea, which could be obtained only with great difficulty and 'after all the pains of getting is only valuable on account of one virtue it hath, that if it be only brought to the sick persons it quickly drives away those called demons, which are the spirits of wicked men that enter into the living and kill them unless they obtain help.†' On which his learned translator remarks, 'We hence may learn the true notions Josephus had of demons and demoniacs, exactly like that of Jews and Christians in the New Testament and of the first four centuries.' In the Apocryphal book of Tobit we discover intimations of this doctrine.‡ Lightfoot|| cites passages from the Rabbinical writings which show a belief in diabolical agency in later times. The opinion of the Christian Fathers has already been noticed. They generally believed in possession and bear witness that this was the common faith. Justin Martyr in the second century speaks of those 'who are siezed and tormented by the souls of the dead, whom all call demoniacs and madmen.' And Chrysostom so lately as the beginning of the fifth century endeavors

* Antiq. viii. 2. 5.

† Bell. Jud. vii. 6. 3.

‡ Tob. iii. 8, and chap. vi. and viii.

|| On Luke xiii. 11.

to correct some errors which prevailed, as he says, among 'the many' respecting demons.*

The New Testament, as has been already remarked in several instances, affords proof that the notion of possession had taken firm hold of the public mind and was universally accredited. If it had not been established previously to our Lord's appearance, must not his language have excited the utmost surprise? If possession was then first heard of, should we not discover in the history some mark of the amazement which must have been felt? Nothing of this kind appears. On the contrary the situation of the demoniacs was evidently familiar to the people. They manifest no wonder except that with authority and by a word the sufferers were relieved.† We have positive as well as negative evidence in the New Testament that this was a common notion among the Jews before the time of Christ. How else shall we account for the prevalent practice of exorcism, which Jesus quoted in his argument with the Pharisees and which they tacitly acknowledged?‡ Or for the existence of the same pretensions among the Jews of Asia

* Semler has given the best collection of extracts from the Fathers. *Commentatio*, pp. 48—60, note. He concludes his citation of passages with this remark. 'It appears then that there were formerly among the Christian teachers some who would have thought it foolish and unworthy of them to maintain that a demon was actually present in the demoniac; although many and most others held most resolutely this belief, as if it was something of great value and connected with the very genius of Christianity.' 'Ex his &c.' He also quotes Philo and the Septuagint as authorities, but the passages which he adduces are not of sufficient importance to be repeated.

† It is a remark of Worthington, though he turns it to a different purpose, that 'These are introduced as matters of ordinary occurrence. There could be nothing new therefore or strange in them at the time of the gospel.' *Enquiry*, pp. 313, 314.

‡ Matt. xii. 27, and the parallel passages.

Minor?*

So little reason is there for supposing that demoniacal cases distinguished the epoch of the introduction of Christianity.

The use in profane Greek of the terms 'to be mad' and 'to be demonized' as if they had a similar if not a common meaning, the explanations which the ancient physicians gave of the distempers with which demoniacs were afflicted, and the testimony of some Jewish as well as Christian writers that 'melancholy was called an evil spirit,' in addition to what has already been said, may prove the connexion which was thought to exist between certain disorders and demoniacal agency.† One passage in Josephus is so remarkable that I cannot omit it. He is describing the impostors and robbers by whom Judea was vexed, and in speaking of a body of

* Acts xix. 13. Ver. 19 is a farther proof that they studied the arts of magic.

† Jortin, who admitted the reality of possession observes, 'Is it not probable that the ancient Christians accounted mad and melancholy and epileptic people to be possessed, at least for the most part? which would greatly increase the number of demoniacs. The Jews seem to have received some additional notions concerning evil spirits and their operations from the Chaldeans; and after their return from the captivity to have ascribed many diseases and disorders to these invisible agents, besides those which were not to be accounted for by natural causes; and in this the ancient Christians followed them.' Remarks on Eccles. Hist. Vol. I. p. 300. Farmer thus states the result of his inquiries. 'When they saw a person acting as if he was in a deep melancholy, which the Jews thought John the Baptist was because he denied himself the pleasures of society and the usual refreshments of nature; when they observed any speaking and behaving irrationally and strangely bent upon doing mischief to themselves and others, as madmen are apt to be; or having no command over themselves, not even over the members of their own bodies, like epileptics; it was hence concluded that the patient had a demon. If at the same time the patient lost his sight, his speech or hearing when there was no visible defect in the organs, the patient was said to have a demon that was blind, dumb, or deaf.' Essay, p. 111.

these men he says, 'These prevailed with the multitude to act like madmen,' where the original might be more literally translated, 'They persuaded the multitude to act the demon.*' It is a pertinent inquiry also, how the practice of exorcism could have survived a single year's trial; unless some success had attended it; but what effect would human skill or ingenuity have on demons? If restoration followed the attempts of the Jews to eject demons, the symptoms which were supposed to indicate their presence must have been the effects of natural disorder of body or mind. The resemblance between the demoniacs described by other writers and those mentioned in Scripture is worthy of notice. Lucian, a Pagan who wrote in the second century, stating the common opinion concerning this class of person says, 'The patient is silent; the demon answers;†' from which it appears that the demon was believed to have control over the organs of the man. Chrysostom says, 'The demoniacs cry out, I am the soul of such an one. But this is no more than a false pretence and a diabolical deception; for it is not the soul of the deceased that so cries out, but the demon that feigns these things to deceive the hearers.' And again, 'The *demons* say, I am the soul of such a monk,' for the purpose, as he adds, of deceiving the hearers; and in another place he speaks of the '*demoniacs* crying out, I am the soul of such an one.‡' The conversation of the Gadarene demoniac with our Saviour must recur to the mind of every reader.

* Bell. Jud. ii. 13. 4.

† Farmer's Essay, p. 250, note.

‡ Worthington's Enquiry, p. 208. Farmer's Essay, pp. 51, 52, note.

It may be said that the prevalence of these notions in various parts of the world and in different ages has been proved, but not their falsehood. And it may be asked how the prevalence of such notions can be explained but on the admission of their justice. And it may also be asked if the opinions of the Christian Fathers, who are admitted to have held these notions as well as to have used the phraseology to which they gave rise, are not entitled to deference. To the first remark it is replied, that probably no one now believes all the stories about demoniacal possession with which Pagan, Jewish and Christian books abound, yet they all may be defended by this argument; and that the prevalence of belief in astrology or witchcraft in former ages is not now taken as a reason for supposing that the stars controlled the health or fortunes of men or that witches were in league with the devil. In answer to the next inquiry it is said, that nothing was more natural than for men in the days of ignorance to ascribe any strange effect, or a malady the cause of which was unknown, to an unseen intelligent, and if the effect was disastrous, a malignant being. Hence arose a belief in evil spirits, and hence demonology grew to its height. The religious systems of the East, and especially that of which Persia was the seat, gave form and substance to the floating conceptions of the people. The Jews, who in ancient times had evinced a proneness to adopt Heathen superstitions, brought back from the Babylonish captivity the elements of this system and incorporated them with the religious faith of their fathers. At a later period their intercourse with Egypt and Greece exposed them to the influence of the mythological systems that prevail-

ed in those countries, and of the philosophy which was then assuming the character and authority that subsequently belonged to it. From these various sources the popular faith in the time of Jesus was loaded with doctrines about demons, and popular language bore the impression of this fact.—In respect to the regard which is due to the Christian Fathers, the unanimous voice of judicious scholars pronounces them in general learned, able and pious men, but by no means free from the errors of their times, fond of a 'vain philosophy,' and regardless of sound principles of interpretation. No one probably would be willing to take them as safe guides in such a question as this which we are examining.

Our last inquiry respects the propriety with which Jesus and his disciples could adopt the language of their age while they knew it was founded on error. And it is asserted by those who deny the reality of demoniacal possession,

13. That they could use this language without compromising their fidelity as religious teachers or honest historians. To support this remark these considerations are offered. Our Lord adopted other erroneous forms of speech which were then in use,* such as those which describe the motions of the solar system. If it be urged in reply that error on this subject could not affect religious faith or character, it may be observed that the evil of wrong belief respecting demoniacs may be improperly magnified, and that the example

* Under this remark might be quoted his descriptions of the progress of his religion and the future happiness of his disciples in terms that expressed Jewish conceptions. See Mark xiv. 62, Luke xxii. 29, 30, Matt. xx. 23.

offered is conclusive in respect to the main point, viz. that Jesus could consistently use popular expressions though founded on false ideas. Our Lord declined the opportunity which was given him of removing another error of a moral or metaphysical kind. When his disciples asked him, 'Lord, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' though their question seemed to rest on a belief in the existence of the soul before its entrance into the body—a notion that had found some favor in Judea, he did not avail himself of the occasion to supplant this error, but gave a direct answer to their question.* Our Lord avoided such topics as lay aside from the purpose of his mission, refusing at one time to decide an appeal respecting property,† and at another to give an opinion concerning the justice of one of the laws of Moses.‡ He did not appear as a reformer of errors in detail, he left many false opinions untouched, he would have involved himself in endless contests with the Scribes and in fruitless labors with the people if he had assailed every erroneous doctrine that he found in the land.|| He suffered his Apostles to remain under wrong impressions about the nature of his kingdom, and their reluctance to receive the truth on this subject shows how tenaciously the Jewish mind clung

* John ix. 2, 3.

† Luke xii. 14.

‡ John viii. 3—11.

|| Paley's observation is pertinent and happy. 'The doctrine [of demoniacal possession] was not what Christ brought into the world. It appears in the Christian records incidentally and accidentally, as being the subsisting opinion of the age and country in which his ministry was exercised. It was no part of the object of his revelation to regulate men's opinions concerning the action of spiritual substances upon animal bodies.' *Evidences*, Part III. Chap. 2.

to established opinions, and how difficult would have been the task to dislodge old errors singly. He used the figurative language of the day, borrowing sensible images to represent spiritual truth and dramatic or scenic description to illustrate moral principles.* He confessed that he accommodated himself to the capacities and prejudices of his hearers; gave this as a reason for speaking to the people in parables,† and declared to his disciples at the close of his ministry, 'I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now;‡ the Evangelists expressly state that 'without a parable spake he not to them,' and that 'with many such parables spake he the word unto them as *they were able to bear it.*'|| The embarrassments which were thrown in his way, the ready cavils of the Pharisees and the obtuse passions of the populace exhibited on so many occasions during his short ministry may convince us that it was the part of wisdom to avoid every unnecessary cause of offence. To have attacked the common faith in demons would have particularly exposed him to derision or brought upon him hostility, since the ignorance both of anatomy and of metaphysics which was universal among the Jews would have drawn him into continual unprofitable discussions. And finally, his object and labor and the result of his ministry was, to introduce a religion which should gradually subvert the whole system of

* Witness his parables, and his description of the day of judgment.

† Matt. xiii. 13.

‡ John xvi. 12.

|| Matt. xiii. 34, Mark iv. 33. Bishop Lowth does not scruple to say that 'in using the emblematical images expressing heaven and hell which were in use among the Jews before his time our Saviour complied with their notions.' Lowth's Isaiah, note on lxvi. 24.

demonology and bring men to just views of the government of God. He did not live nor teach for that age alone; and if he foresaw that much evil would arise from a belief in demoniacal possession, he also foresaw that other and greater evils would arise in his church which yet he did not prevent, for it was his business to promulgate and establish those simple principles of truth and duty which would purify the mind that humbly embraced them of its errors and ultimately redeem the world from superstition and sin. In a word, while the men of his own age were disputing about his divine authority, to have directly condemned the popular belief about demons would have only been a useless assault on firmly-rooted persuasions and an unwise contribution to the means which his enemies might use for his disadvantage; while he most effectually saved future ages from the same error by revealing the comprehensive articles of a true faith.

His disciples were in most respects situated as he was. They would have had the same prejudices to combat among Jews and similar prepossessions among Pagans, if they had attempted to change the language of every country which they visited. They were permitted, it is thought by many, to retain some wrong opinions of a far more serious kind during their ministry—the expectation of their Master's personal return, and of the near approach of the day of judgment. It was the maxim of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, 'to become all things to all men, that he might by all means save some;'^{*} and we discover from his Epistles

^{*} 1 Cor. ix. 22.

that he did not esteem it wrong to use the fanciful language of his countrymen respecting both the material and the spiritual worlds, nor to convert their faulty methods of interpretation into the weapons of argument.* The Evangelists had their contemporaries in their eye when writing; they were plain men, not philosophical historians; they adopted the modes of expression with which they were acquainted; and it was better to write in the language of the time, under which the essential facts and truths of the history would be conveyed to their readers, than by deviating from this phraseology to expose their narratives to prejudice both among their friends and their enemies.

That either our Lord or his disciples should have used language with other than literal accuracy should not offend us, when we remember that we speak of being 'inspired,' 'fascinated' or 'bewitched,' that we call certain diseases by names given them under false impressions, as St. Anthony's fire, St. Vitus's dance, that we invoke the Heathen muses who we know were creatures of the imagination, and that the very state of mental derangement on which we have now so long dwelt is described by expressions as far from truth as those of ancient demonology, as that 'the mind wanders,' 'a man is out of his head,' or he 'has not his senses.' Whatever suspicion may be brought upon the integrity either of Jesus or of his disciples from their

* In 2 Cor. xii. 2, Paul speaks of a man 'caught up to the third heaven;'—a manifest allusion to a Rabbinical fiction. In Ephes. i. 21, and Colos. i. 16, he is thought by many commentators to refer to Jewish speculations respecting different orders of angels. Galat. iv. 22—31 presents a remarkable example of the allegorical use of the Old Testament which was admired by the Jews.

use of such language must be grounded on the fact, that at the time it was associated with an erroneous belief in the minds of men. How far the considerations that have been presented will obviate this difficulty every one can judge.

The circumstances which attended, or strictly speaking, which followed the cure of the Gadarene demoniacs and which I passed over in my remarks on that miracle, I have thought deserve a separate notice, because they present a difficulty independent of the immediate subject of our inquiry. If the men were maniacs whose disorder and restoration are described after the manner of the times, the destruction of the swine might be related after the same manner, especially as the language of the demoniac suggested the use of such terms. A crazy man believing himself possessed by spirits, who were styled unclean from their residence among the tombs where they must according to the Jewish law acquire pollution, and supposing himself the instrument to convey their requests, might ask of Jesus permission for them to enter animals which the law accounted unclean and which he might therefore imagine to be a suitable residence for them. Such a request would be in accordance with the impressions which rested on his mind. But that spiritual beings should have desired to take up their abode in a herd of swine, or that they should have expected to escape the punishment which they knew Jesus could inflict on them by obtaining his leave to enter these animals, and that they should immediately upon entering the swine force them into the Lake where they were drowned, is so improbable that it is scarcely credible. The

common explanation attributes to them great folly and a love of mischief that is almost ludicrous.—The immediate cause of the rushing of the herd towards the precipice, if they were not impelled by demons, is not indeed discernible from the narrative. Lardner thought* that they were frightened by the demoniacs, who before their restoration to reason ran towards them with outcries and violent gestures; but this opinion supposes an effect to be produced by an inadequate cause. Semler† conjectures that they were terrified by thunder; but this is a mere conjecture. Others with more likelihood of truth ascribe the madness of the swine immediately to Jesus, who was pleased miraculously to make them the agents of their own destruction; and as the leprosy of Naaman was said to be transferred to Gehazi,‡ the disease of the demoniacs might be said to come upon the swine; which in the language of the period was represented as the passage of the demons from the men to the animals.—The peculiar difficulty to which I just alluded is one which presses on each mode of interpretation. Why did Jesus direct or permit—it is immaterial which word we use, when his consent was so plainly given as appears from the history—such a destruction of life and property? His works were at other times works of beneficence. As this inquiry does not relate to the subject under our notice, I will only remark that in the blasting of the fig tree|| and the overturning of the tables of the money-changers§ our

* Remarks on Dr Ward's Dissertations, Chap. I.

† Commentatio, p. 83, note.

‡ 2 Kings v. 27.

|| Matt. xxi. 19, Mark xi. 14.

§ Matt. xxi. 12, Mark xi. 15, John ii. 15.

Lord exhibited a similar disregard of life and property, and that he may have deemed this a righteous punishment of the owners, if they or any part of them were Jews, and a proper method of giving notoriety to his cure of the demoniacs and of fixing the remembrance of it in the minds of the people of that region.*

I have now presented whatever I regard as important in this inquiry. I have been desirous to collect the materials from which others may form their own opinions, and have therefore been especially careful to adduce the testimony of Scripture. I have confined myself to the single question of demoniacal possession, as discussions on the general powers of evil spirits and their connexion with human affairs seem to me to have unnecessarily encumbered the subject. It has probably been perceived by the reader that I incline to the opinion that the demoniacs were only diseased persons, and as such I shall speak of them in the future pages of the Interpreter.†

* It has been suggested that some external circumstance was needed to convince either the demoniac or the people that he was really cured, or they else might have supposed that one of the lucid intervals of his disorder returned while he was conversing with Jesus; and that to produce this conviction in him who was possessed with the idea that he was the instrument and home of demons, it was necessary to meet the idea by adopting his language respecting their departure. Such an explanation is ingenious, but it is not certain that this man had intervals of sanity, as the expression 'oftentimes,' Luke viii. 29, may be rendered, as is a similar phrase in ver. 27, 'a long time.'

† It should have been said in the note on p. 268 that a fair abstract of the arguments on both sides of this question may be found in Jahn's *Biblical Archæology*, pp. 214—230.

EDITORIAL NOTE.

This number concludes the second volume of the Interpreter. It has now been maintained for a year, and I can speak with some confidence of its continuance. More encouragement has been received through the increase of subscribers than I dared to anticipate, but less assistance from writers than I had hoped. I regret that such irregularity has attended the publication of the numbers; it has been partly occasioned by the necessity of supplying so much of the matter myself. I have endeavored to observe two rules,—to exclude every thing which might wear a controversial or sectarian aspect, and to admit no anonymous communication. The latter rule has, I believe, deprived me of some valuable articles, but the reasons for which it was adopted seem to me to justify an adherence to it, and I cannot but think that they who deem the work useful will so far relinquish their scruples as to give me their help even under this condition. I have studied variety, though I may not have satisfied the wishes of every one in this respect. As the continuation of the expository articles on the Gospels must for a long time keep my own explanation of Scripture within very narrow limits, I intend to give brief expositions of passages in the Epistles taken from different commentators. Whatever in the past numbers has not borne the name of the author has been written by me, and in future to all articles of my writing the word, Editor, will be annexed. The responsibility of every line will then rest on the proper person.

EZRA S. GANNETT.